

Ballads
from

PUNCH

and other Poems
Warham St. Leger.





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BALLADS FROM "PUNCH."

BALLADS FROM "PUNCH"

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

WARHAM ST. LEGER



LONDON

DAVID STOTT, 370, OXFORD STREET, W

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BALLADS FROM "PUNCH."

SUMMER BOATING SONG.

SUN on the slumbrous meadows,
Sun on the sleeping trees ;
Massy and deep the shadows
Stirred by no vagrant breeze.
Rhythmical in the riggers,
Oars with a steady shock
Tell how we work like niggers
For a cool in the plashy lock.

And it's oh, for the neck of the camel,
The ostrich, snake, giraffe !
And what if to-morrow I *am* ill,
To-day it is mine to quaff.

Bother my rates and taxes !
Crown me the mantling bowl ;
The world has gone off its axis,
It's nothing but Life and Soul.

To-day, like the books of the Sibyl,
Is waningly dearer still,
As the sunset echoes wibble
From a cloud-clean saffron hill.

Calm is the solemn surface
Of waters that woo the skies,
And tenderly calm is her face
Who gazes with larger eyes
At the deepening purple above her,
While over her, small and white,
There leans, like a courtly lover,
The sweetness of all the night.

All day in the sun we boated,
How can I tell how far?
For years in the sun we floated,
For ages that yellow star
Behind the poplar has trembled,
And down to the wine-dark deep,
While softer day dissembled
The Midsummer call to sleep.

And it's oh, for the neck of the camel,
The ostrich, snake, giraffe,
What though to-morrow I *am* ill,
To-night I am fain to quaff.

THE LARKS AND THE ROSES.

(*Ballad, by Milton Featherly Jonsone.*)

THE roses were blowing, like whales in the sea
Where the apple-bloom icebergs plunged fearless
and free,

And the larks carolled madly their high jubilee

In the ether.

The daisies ran riot in sunshine and shade,

And the call of the cuckoo was heard from the glade,

Where Summer with mellow monotony play'd

On her zither.

Tempo di Valse.

Ho, larks and roses !

Hey, the bonny weather !

Hey, we rose at morning prime ;

Ho, we larked together !

'Mid roses and larks in our shallop we glide

By Inglesham poplars, on Teddington's tide,

Where the waters of Thame under Sinodun slide,

And at Marlow,

By Cliveden's green caverns, and Abingdon's walls,
Where wirgles the Windrush, where Eynsham weir falls,
By Sonning, or Sandford (whose lasher recalls

Mr. Barlow).

Con tenerezza.

Oh, larks, and ro(w)ses
On the shining river ;
Silver water-lilies, love ;
Love will last for ever !

But the blooms turn'd to apples for urchins to munch,
And the roses were sold at a penny a bunch,
And the larks were served up for an Alderman's lunch,
Dead and cold, love ;
And the lustre has faded from tresses and cheek,
And the eyes do not sparkle, the eyes that I seek,
And the temper is strong and the logic is weak
Of my old love.

Snuffiamente.

No larks and roses
In a winter gloaming ;
Ruby-red love's nose is ;
Chilblain time a-coming.

“ONE AT A TIME.”

HEAVILY through the Casino
The fumes of the roses float ;
Heart of my heart! How could *he* know
She had come by the tidal-boat,
As stiff as a royal merino,
Or the fur of the sea-side goat?

(Andante hideoso.)

And he danced on one and the other,
He was far too ugly to care,
And Beauty her shrieks would smother,
And Valour forget to swear,
For he was a famous Poet,
And rich and debonair.

(Tempo di Valse.)

“One at a time, love, one at a time!
Ever he murmured the old sweet rime;
One at a time, love; fair is fair,
Haro! and motley's the only wear!”

(Puffo ma non troppo.)

And he leaned from the lush Casino,
And scanned the sounding sea ;
Like the salt of a fruitless Eno,
It cream'd with a mocking glee,
Or moaned like the Moning Congou
At a foggy Five o'Clock Tea.

They play'd at the little horses,
But little of them reck'd he,
As he yearn'd for the stars in their courses
And the moon in her crescentrie,
And his pulses reserv'd their forces,
For there in the dusk was She.

(Twingiamente.)

And the vacant space where his heart had place
Throob'd with a fancied pain,
As the phantom boot on a long-lost foot
Wakes bygone griefs again.

(Maestoso giocoso.)

There's a lonely tomb where surges boom
And the griddering pebbles grind,—
But he dances on one and the other,
He is far too ugly to mind.

*"One at a time, love, one at a time!
Softly he murmurs the sweet, old rime ;
One at a time, love ; fair is fair,
Haro ! and molley's the only wear."*

THE PLAINT OF THE GRAND PIANO.

I WAS a grand piano once—nay, hearken what I say—
The grandeur is no longer here, it left me yesterday.
One leather-souled executant at a sitting could demolish
The mellow pride of tuneful years, of tone, and power,
and polish.

A dapper man, with weary brow, and smile of conscious
pow'r,
A Jove, prepared to improvise tone-thunder by the hour
Is Nasmyth Hammermann, whose touch would disconcert
the dead,
Whose foot would rush with pedal-crush where angels
fear to tread.

He kept his soul in patience while lesser people played,
As one who bears with cruder views that taste-bound souls
degrade ;
He pitied plaintive melody and winning modulation,
Biding his time—and then it came—the afternoon's
sensation.

He hovered over the keyboard, like a wild beast over its
prey,
And he tossed his head, and he rattled his wrists—and
then he began to play ;
To play ! And in that crowded room was none with
heart to see
That what was play to him and them was worse than
death to me !

He struck a chord, as a hawk strikes a lark who is dumb
with fear,
And his fingers spread over the octaves like a slander in
full career,
And my overstrung nerves that waited the worst nigh
sprung from the shuddering case
As he finished his horrible prelude with an awful bang in
the bass.

He gloated ; I waited ; and then began a butchery great
and grim,
And melody screamed and harmony writhed, and form,
rent limb from limb,
Was hurled in murderous *largesse* to the careless, ravening
crowd,
Who chatted and laugh'd the louder, as my agony waxed
more loud.

He checked his course, and he wirgled round, till he found
the soul of pain,
And he thumped it with pitiless finger, again, again,
again !
Then, like a pawing horse let go, he tore at headlong
pace,
And drowned the tortured treble's cry in the roar of an
anguished bass.

My tenderest tones, that answer clear the artist's lightest
touch,
Were yank'd in handfuls out like hair in some fierce
maniac's clutch,
And my beautiful keys, that never yet had sullied their
tuneful pride,
Like elephants with the tusk-ache in ivory anguish cried.

Hark to the murmurs sad and low, self-struck upon my
strings,
Such music as a dying love, unknown, unsolaced sings,
For yesterday's undreamt disgrace can never not have
been,
And I must shrink from music now, and sob "Unclean,
unclean !"

The girls have practised on me in endless ladders of scales,
Whereby they mounted to castled heights, and the realms
of fairy tales ;

And I loved their wayward endeavours, and my patient
sweetness at last

Won them to tell me their love's young dreams as I
hallowed their childhood's past.

And the Governess, meek and modest, who counted the
tale of bars,

Would slip from the sleeping children, and the school-
room worries and jars ;

And the tender heart would open to me, and, work-a-day
woes forgot,

The pencil-cramped hands would tremble, and the tears
from her heart well'd hot.

They called her a Perfect Treasure, but 'twas I alone who
knew

The tale of the young life's struggle, so tender and brave
and true ;

And when she touched me I told it, and somebody
listened and learned,

And the winter-time went out of her life, and the daffodil
days returned.

And Maud in her tempers would bang away—Sweet
Maud—for I often heard
The *fortissimo* suddenly ended in a kiss like the chirp of
a bird.
And Mabel's curious reveries—how soon a piano
discovers
When a girl gives one hand to her music, and the other
is clasped in her lover's.

Perchance some tender hand again may soothe my tortured
heart,
May heal the scars of Hammermann with balm of rare
Mozart ;
Perchance the Nocturne's mystic feet may through my
caverns stray,
When great Beethoven's passion-storms have cleansed the
plague away.

But no, farewell that happy past ; henceforth I'm only
fit
To play the concertina's part to wandering niggers'
wit ;
Or, as a street-piano, find as jubilant a goal
As a wet day in China when you do not know a soul.

Yet it may be my past deserts may win a loftier place,
Low in the outer walks of Art, not blatant in disgrace ;
And Music's tutelary powers may bid their Outcast go
And be the sacred music in a panoramic show,
And moan "*The Village Blacksmith*" when the lights are
burning low.

THE LAY OF THE LOST CRITIC.

YES, Sir, you're right ; I *have* come down. Thanks.
Three of Irish cold.

Well, like the fox who lost his tail, I've little to unfold.
Thank you, I don't mind if I do. My dear, the same
again.

--*I was a Critic once, who lived on "Chicken and
Champagne."*

You see me now, a Sandwich-man ! Me ! who was
once a scorner [Warner:
Of Sims's dramatized low life, of peasant pride in
The author's skill, the actor's art, were caviare to me,
A Boardman now—a Woodman once who didn't spare
the Tree.

The pallid playwright, sick with care, would angle for a
smile, [awhile ;
The actor, like a pricked balloon, would sink his side
My pen blackmailed the wretched Pro's like levelled
pistol's muzzle ; [guzzle !
I had a price, and got it too. Law ! how I used to

Whene'er I hear the captive cock that from the area
crows,
(For down our court they keep a lot to trouble my
repose,)
Whene'er I pass the bottle-shop, my tears I scarce
restrain,
They 'mind me of those bygone hours of Chicken and
Champagne.

I thought myself a power indeed. Nor was I all to
blame,
For men I scarcely knew by sight would conjure with
my name.
—"A great night at the Club to-night ; Jack Bounder's
coming down !"—
They called me Jack behind my back, and trembled at
my frown.

Oh, happy days of pleasing toil, of feasting on the best,
When conscious pride of guerdon earned gave every meal
a zest !
Loud was the laugh that ever met the oldest joke from
me,
And mine the health that always went with rousing three
times three !

And so the prosperous years sped on, till in an evil day
I spurned the Critic's easy throne, and thought to write
a play.

I'd prove to flattering crowds that still fresh laurels could
be won,

And show poor playwrights how the thing ought really
to be done.

And I would wed a chorister, a slender, fair-haired thing.
I thought that she might act—in time. (I knew she
could not sing.)

I pitched upon a German farce to start my honest life,
Picked all the "plums" from all the parts, and wrote
them for my wife.

* * * * *

Gods! how they hissed and hooted! You could
scarcely hear a word;

—The *artistes* turned in wrath on *me*, because *they* got
"the bird."

And she, my destined bride, remarked, with irony
abstruse,

"You've had so much of Chicken, that you ought to
welcome *Goose*."

And so the spell was broken. Oh, what a fool was I
To risk the unassailed success of those who never try !
No more obsequious Managers besought me for a play,
And meanest mummers ceased to care a rap what I could
say.

Then down and ever down I sunk ; dropped out of all my
Clubs ;
And in a year or two I came to “prossing” round the
“pubs.”
But, venal still, I made a bit by penning spiteful “pars”
On those who had not half-a-crown when “whispered”
at the bars.

But that is past—and here I am ; and few things make
me sore,
Save when at luncheon-time I chance to pass Milano’s
door,
And see the Drama’s minor lights sail in in silk and
satin ;
—The pride of learning haunts me still—I curse in Greek
and Latin.

Good-bye, Sir. Thank you kindly. It is time for me
to go
To advertise Fitznoodle’s play with measured tread and
slow.

Fitzboodle ! whom I slated so, it turned his hair half-grey !

—And now I carry boards about to advertise his play !

Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell to thee, thou stranger host—

He writeth best who writeth least, and yet who praiseth most.

He writeth best who findeth good to praise in great and small,

For fools who can't tell good from bad make game alike of all.

“THE REVENGE.”

A Ballad of the Ordnance.

I'LL tell you the story, my Masters, for I was one of
the crew
Who mann'd the *Revenge* in the Roossian war of eighteen-
ninety-two,
I'm one of the seven heroes—you can put it so if you like,
Who lived to tell of the famous fight, when we sunk her
rather than strike.

The last of the seven survivors. And eighteen years ago,
A score and more sat down to dine in public all of a row,
But the annual banquet thinn'd us, and the Music Halls
tell at last,
And the Charity Organisers make history very fast.

Our ship was built by an English firm for a foreign naval
pow'r,
But they sold the ship and the foreigner too in Britain's
trial hour ;
So we knew that the craft was smart and staunch as
money and skill could make her,
And if it hadn't been for her guns, no vessel afloat could
take her.

But they used to serve self-acting guns to the Navy of
that day,
That drove the breech-piece through the side, or blew the
muzzle away :
And the crews jumped overboard, and waited in water up
to their necks,
Till the iron shards had settled themselves a little about
the decks.

'Twas all very well in peace-time, and the drill was
pleasant enough,
For the order was, No firing, when the weather is cold or
rough,
But it didn't answer in action when the enemy's fire was
hot,
For we stood to our guns, and cheered like mad, but
never returned a shot.

But ours was the fastest ship afloat, and armed with a
terrible beak,
So most of the cruise in '92 was a game of hide-and-seek.
For we sank the powerfulest ironclads with our ram at a
single blow,
And many a mast-head flag I've snatched as the vessel
was sucked below.

One brilliant summer morning a squadron hove in sight ;
Lor' how we cheered, for all our chaps were spoiling for
a fight ;

And down, full-speed, upon the fleet our gallant vessel
bore

With a mighty rift in the sea behind, and a pillar of foam
before.

And snowy fleeces slowly round the Russian war-ships
grew,

And vivid flashes lit the way as monster bolts tore
through ;

But she ducked and dodged like a playful dog as higher
the smoke arose,

And quivered and shook with the joy of battle hurling
upon her foes.

And the deadly space grew shorter, till plain the foe we
saw,

And the triumph in their faces changed suddenly to awe :

" Hi ! Hi ! You've crossed a dozen mines ! " the
Russian Captain cried,

" You're out of action, you lubbers ! " And we crashed
through his iron side.

Ship after ship with foaming jaws the thirsty ocean drank,
As fast before our deadly prow they shuddered and reeled
and sank ;
But still with floating pall of smoke fresh war-ships
round us drew,
And still, as fast as one was sunk, we had to tackle two.

Our vessel reeled and staggered, too ; in swathes her
heroes fell,
As round and through and over us came tons of shot and
shell ;
And her plates like sheets were flapping, and cheerly
above the din
Whenever they gave a loud rat-tat, our Captain cried,
" Come in ! "

The still sea-floor was strewn with wrecks and guns and
gallant dead,
Whose stony eyes stared up to mock the tumult overhead ;
And fiercer still the fight went on, till, when the sun was
low,
Our shatter'd ship could neither stand nor deal another
blow.

And then the Captain called us round ; the fight grew
slack, it seem'd,
As through the rolling mounds of smoke the muffled sun-
set beam'd ;
And when the lees of that strong crew were gathered
round to hear,
You could not see how few we were : you heard it in our
cheer.

" My lads," he said, " you've fought this day as English-
men should fight,
We've kept all day a fleet at bay—we won't give in at
night.
The water through our riven sides is pouring in by tons—
We cannot win—we will not strike—now, lads, to
the guns ! "

Unwitting of that stern resolve the Russians closer drew,
While still in triumph at the peak the British ensign
flew ;
But vultures wheel, and sea-birds scream, when through
the vessel runs
That last stern whisper of the brave—" We're going to
fire the guns ! "

* * * * *

And still in fearful whispers the Russian sailor tells
How the air grew dark with muzzles, and jackets, and
coils, and shells,
And part of a forty-three-ton gun hit the Admiral on the
head,
And he cried, "It is grand—but it is not war"—and his
gallant spirit fled.

And so the *Revenge*, unconquered, went down by the
Baltic shores,
And they punished the seven survivors for wasting the
Ordnance stores ;
And they've issued a gun that a child could fire, and none
of it blows away ;
The others were good enough for us— the Navy has had
its day !

THE BALLAD OF THE BROKEN BARONET.

FITZ-JOGYNS at his breakfast sat, late-risen from
his bed,

Fitz-Jogyns of the ample purse, large heart, and empty
head ;

And by him was the Baronet, whose friendship was the
crown

Of all the simple triumphs of his short career in town.

But wan and wrinkled was his cheek, unkempt his hair
to-day,

Where watchful time had cleft the dye with a great gash
of grey,

And open-mouthed Fitz-Jogyns sat, like one who doth
not know,

While thus the Baronet spake on, with husky voice and
low :—

“ Last night you saw me *point de vice*, in fashion's nicest
mould ;

A shrivelled husk of self-respect this morning you behold,
Who'd gladly take his leave of life, and, if you have it
handy,

A dash of seltzer-water in a claret-glass of brandy.

" I told you that the wine we drank—and fast your praises
ran—

Was a sort of Indian sherry from the Isles of Andaman ;
I don't believe the vine would grow precisely in that zone.
The wine was made in Bermondsey—a vintage quite my
own.

" Now for awhile the moral scales have fallen from my
eyes,

The hot remorse of 'coppers' melts the adamant of lies ;
And hear, Fitz-Jogyns, while I sketch, succinctly as I can,
The *facilis descensus* of a shifty gentleman.

" Well-born, well-bred, I launched in life with dreams of
a career

That need not owe to favour what it ne'er should lose by
fear ;

But weighted with the poet-pow'r that sways imagined
scenes,

And high desires that could not brook the limit of my
means.

" ' Above Suspicion ' I had made the motto of my life ;
With mutual credit I'd have run away with Cæsar's wife ;
And shady things, as done by me, a Cato might disarm,
Their very shadiness acquired a cool and mystic charm.

“ And with the best I ruffled it in Town and Camp and
Court,
Till here a horse and there a card those halcyon days cut
short ;
But, calm in all contingencies, 'twere false to say I fell—
I rather changed with frequency my Social Parallel.

“ Barr'd by involuntary schisms from mixing with my
peers,
I found kind hearts and simple faith in friends of humbler
spheres ;
And oh, be sure you're downward bound when you begin
to prize
The moral virtues of the friends whose manners you
despise.

“ There is a charm that lingers still about this social
wreck,
Fair flow'rs of speech and courtly blooms the corpse of
honour deck,
And so persuasive are my ways, that, on the lowest ramp,
I half persuade myself that I am really not a scamp.

“ I've dash'd, a high-horse Cavalier, the writter's soaring
hope ;
With Indian craft I've shot the moon on the pacific slope ;

By force or fraud to one and all the destin'd moment
came
To curse my charming manners and revile my ancient
name.

"As waltz-worn spinsters closer cling to waning hopes of
marriage,
As baby-laden ladies steer straight for a smoking-carriage,
As authors haunt the friend in need who reads their first
romance,
So round the titled carcase flock the vultures of finance.

" 'What's in a name?' the poet asks. Well, I have found
in mine
A standing tasting-order for all sorts of curious wine,
A round of brief Directorships on Companies, where need
Makes Baronets acquainted with strange board-fellows
indeed ;

"A passport to the vaguest Clubs of brotherhood complete,
Where booted Lords on common ground with Belted
artists meet,
Where Lion cubs of comic strain accost the shady City,
And nothing much is known against a few of the
Committee.

“ But chiefly in exploiting wines I’ve shown my practis’d
skill,
The Mithridates of the docks, impervious to ill,—
Yet deem not that the gentle tout can duly earn his bread
Unless above the face of brass he wear the flinty head.

“ And mine, methought, were proof indeed. I’ve quaffed
the livelong day,
Huge flasks of Cipanasti in the small *tratterie*,
I’ve drunk Sauer Staut without a wink beside the Castled
Rhine,
And whelmed the storied scene in floods of Bauehnotten-
wein.

“ I’ve sampled every deadly brand the chymick art can
blend,
I’ve sampled them myself before I’ve tried them on a friend,
And weird Antipodean draughts, where all the headaches
flee
From bucketsful of happier growth, have wrought no ill
to me.

“ I’ve lived on Autowitz, which drives the rude
Carinthian boor
To play tattoos with Alpenstocks upon his tutor’s door ;

One glass makes strong men swear eternal friendship to a
stranger,
At two their dearest friends incur considerable danger.

"And after these I did not dream that any draught could
do
Such mischief as the Indian *brut* I tried to palm on you ;
But that is past, and I have made what slight *amende* I
can,
And told in brief the story of a shifty gentleman.

"That brandy's excellent of yours. It soon will set me
right ;
The potent spirit quite o'ercrows the poison of last night ;
And looking on the world again with a much clearer
head,
I'd ask you to forget, dear boy, whatever I have said.

"But this remember, if you wish a shady thing to do,
Choose faults of which your world is prone to take
a gentle view ;
And don't revoke your Honour card, or you will come
like me,
To drift like a Social Phantom-ship on a Rank Outsider
Sea !"

THE PLAINT OF THE MINOR POET.

SO that's what you call a good notice? You give
me a grasp of the hand,
And, carried away by emotion, a drink you invite me to
stand ;
And, because I am moody and sober, you say what a
fellow I am,
I wish I'd a quire of the papers down the throat of the
writer to cram !

See, I rend the review into ribbons ! That doesn't
express how I hate
These carping appraisers of poets, these slingers of butter
and slate.
But better their finicking bitters, than their infinite
insult of sweets,
When men, who I know never read me, compare me
with Shelley and Keats.

It may be they glance at the pages, such dutiful critics
they are,
As Custom-house officers, careless, pass Tauchnitz and
scent and eigar.

But, you say, they compare me with masters. Why,
there is the sting, don't you see?
For the poet's unborn, nay, unbearable, who's meet to
be measured with me!

I envy not Spenser his splendour, nor Shakespeare his
wit-racking range ;
For none of their gifts or achievements my talent untold
would I change.
Tis Time, not a rival, that wrecks me ; and daily I
curse the decree
That by brute force of years has enabled these bards to
anticipate me.

I edit the sunrise and sunset, I carry the keys of the
Spring,
Investing with merit artistic the songs that the night-
ingales sings ;
Such splendours on life I have lavished as start into light
from the mist,
When the eye in fine frenzy goes rolling full tilt on a
Philistine fist.

I'd instaur a Utopian era, but nought could persuade me
to lose
One glorious orgie of vengeance—to extirpate all the
Reviews !

Enlightened at last, and repentant, while Nemesis after
them treads,

They should praise me, and quote me, and read me—and
then I would cut off their heads.

The world has been waiting and waiting, till sick with a
hope that's deferr'd,

When I sing it the song of its patience, no ripple of
interest is stirr'd;

And "the passionate heart of the poet is whirled into folly
and vice,"

When the girl he would render immortal can brand his
effusions as "nice."

The circle gets smaller and smaller, my singing is fitted
to bless,

Though the quaint and elaborate volumes roll year after
year from the press.

You think that may prove they are worthless, as critics
have said. Be it so.

As Browning's musician would put it, "You're welcome
to argue. I know."

AN ANTICYCLONIC ODE.

AS on my steady threadbare way
Through life I jog,
There is one thing that makes me gay—
A London fog.

I love to wake an hour too late,
In calm seraphic,
Unruffled by the noise I hate,
Of constant traffic.

And find the genial evening hour,
Meridian scorning,
Assert its humanizing pow'r
At early morning.

Without there reigns a hushing spell
O'er London's loud land,
And even 'bus conductors dwell
Awhile in cloudland.

And common objects through the fog
Come looming large,
And lamp-posts up against you jog
In jocund charge.

And streets impervious before,
For fiscal reasons,
Become a safe resort once more,
In foggy seasons.

At thaumaturgic mist's command,
The sordid real
Melts in the boundless wonderland
Of the ideal.

My well-brushed hat, my muffler white,
My coat of blue,
Disguise the fact that they're not quite
As good as new.

Streets where young bards their unsung verse
In third-floor rooms bury—
(The nascent Muse will oft rehearse
To sombre Bloomsbury)—

Become to wandering fancy's view,
While vision slumbers,
The weird old cities Doré drew
In shilling numbers.

And station roofs for once may change
 Their wonted frowns,
And blend majestic in a range
 Of mystic downs.

From cloud-clad tow'rs the hours are spelt,
 Whose turrets fair,
Less blest than *Prospero's* visions, melt
 Into thick air.

But lo ! the swathing vapours fleet
 Like darkness sifted,
And from the rather shamefaced street
 The fog has lifted.

Again, amid its leafless planes,
 I see the Abbey ;
Unchanged, like it, the fact remains
 That I am shabby.

SPRING SONG.

By Lightly Turner.

THE weight that crushed the shrinking buds
Is lifted from the earth,
The soft south wind sets free the floods
That fill the land with mirth.
Sweet April melts in happy tears,
As maiden pride breaks down ;
And, more than I have loved for years,
This year I love Miss Brown.

With shining eyes of azure grey
She looks you through and through,
Until you know not what you say,
And care not what you do.
On lip and brow the laughter lurks
To dazzle and surprise,
As when the urchin's mirror jerks
The sunlight in one's eyes.

We know not why, we know not how,
The long-familiar charm
Should prompt at last the fatal vow,
And curve the dallying arm.

Why nestling love springs up full-fledged,
And flouts the chilling frown—
I only know that I am pledged
For ever to Miss Brown.

Yet ruth restrains the bounding joy
And curbs the flying pen,
In thinking how this must annoy
A lot of other men.
For why should others' visions die
And other hopes sink down
To more domestic calm, while I
Monopolize Miss Brown?

And can I then forget those eyes
Beneath the clustering curls—
Those lambent glances of surprise
At praise of other girls !
Or that supremacy of grace
I notice more and more,
The lucid candour of her face
When corner'd by a bore !

No ! while the sweet world meets the dawn
Still earlier, day by day,
And writes in daisies on the lawn
What poets cannot say ;

While baby birds in every nest
The feathered patience crown,
Still, with Spring's early promise blest,
I'll only love Miss Brown.

But when the solemn feet of night
Are wet with August dew,
When the stars beat so large with light,
And fall adown the blue ;
When the white rose's gracious lips
Are delicately wet,
And the star-gazing lover trips
Across the tennis-net—

When, like a skylark, soars the glass,
And through the shaded room
The fragrant drought of trodden grass
Blends with the rose's bloom ;
When on the sunny lawn she gleams
In white pellucid gown,
Will it have gone the way of dreams—
My passion for Miss Brown?

A TRANSPONTINE STUDY.

YOU think she's a dainty dairymaid
From a Watteau-Dresden dairy,
A nymph from a New Arcadia's glade,
Or a Savoy Theatre fairy ;
A figure cut from a *bon-bon* box,
A cook from a School of Cookery :
Oh, no—she's a study in pink and white,
Of a girl from a London rookery.

Red-kerchieft youths, in furry caps,
Would woo and win—and whop her,
But her demeanour is perhaps
Discouragingly proper ;
And when on gallant lover's breast
Reposing all her weight she's,
In modest wise she drops her eyes,
But never drops her H's.

Her thoughts are, like her attic, high,
Expressed in language stately ;
Though where she picks the language up
Has exercised me greatly.

And the dangerous classes worship her,
As Buddhists their Grand Lama ;
And that is the London flow'r-girl's form
As seen in a melodrama.

AN APPEAL TO APOLLO.

(*From a Quiet Neighbourhood.*)

A SCORE of organs all the day
Wheeze, hammer, reel, and grind it—
The Chord the lady tried to play,
But failed, alas, to find it.

And nomad merchants roar *sans cesse*
Their barter-checking jargon,
Until I almost learn to bless
Their efforts when they *are* gone.

Their dainty-footed donkeys bray
As elsewhere bray no donkeys ;
And German bands of demons play
In tottering time and wrong keys.

With raucous voice he breaks my rest
Who thunders forth the dirges
Of clothes that once, belike, were “best,”
The Rag-and-Boanerges.

O Phœbus, have them all convey'd
Afar, in peace, to fill a
Sahara of itinerant trade,
But spare the poet's villa !

DOMESTIC MELODIES;

OR, SONGS OF SENSE AND SENTIMENT.

NO. I.—“MY WIFE HAS GONE AWAY.”

A GAINST a leaden sky the tree
 (There's one in my suburban garden)
Uplifts its ebon tracery,
And, as I gaze, I almost see
 The scanty gravel freeze and harden ;
And yet my heart is glad as May,
Because my wife has gone away.

Sweet ties of home ! New cares in vain
 Their piety essay to smother,
While those old spells the bride constrain
To play at maidenhood again,
 And stay, a child once more, with mother.
Thank goodness, mother was not led
To come and stay with her instead.

Come hither, button-studded boy !
 South, north, and west despatch the fiery
Cross, with its tale of festal joy ;

With plectral sixpences employ
The strings of the electric lyre !
Bid Smith and Brown and Jones attend
The feast of their recover'd friend.

To-day in Cambridge guise we'll meet,
As when some startling work we still meant,
When dancing measures stirr'd our feet,
And hope made all the future sweet—
Before we met with its fulfilment.
We'll spend a true Ambrosian day,
Because my wife has gone away.

Not that I love Amanda less,
But that I wish to love her better,
'Tis well to loose the loving stress
That makes me sometimes fail to bless
The memorable day I met her ;
She putting on the final word
A value that I deem absurd.

And soon to more marital mind
You bring me back, you careless cook, you !
And, thanks to Mary Jane, I find,
(Like mouse unwatch'd to play inclined,)
Μεταβολή not *παντῶν γλυκὺ*.
When kettles boil and boots are black,
Be sure my wife is coming back !

NO. II.—TO LUCASTA, ON THINKING OF GOING TO
THE WARS.

TELL me not, Sweet, I am unkind,
Nor recreant to thy worth,
That in Bulgaria's wastes I find
A Special's trying berth.

True, from your Bayswater I range,
And all its social zeal ;
And, for too-doubtful lodgings, change
My residence genteel.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As you too will adore :
If I should stay at home too much,
You'd find me *such* a bore.

No. III.—UPON THYRSIS TAKING A JOURNEY.

THYRSIS, when we parted, swore.
This was very wrong of Thyrsis :
Yet, reflecting what 'twas for,
One can half excuse his curses.

For he saw his luggage neat
T'wards a distant platform trundled,
While upon the carriage seat
Alien packages were bundled.

Quickly as the deed was done,
Faster flow'd his speech reproving ;
While upon a two-hours' run
Faster still the train was moving.

Thyrsis was, as usual, late ;
I had told him he would be so ;
(Which was not an adequate
Reason for his blessing *me* so.)

Careless words a friend may stab ;
No one's temper could be shorter.
Yet *I* had to pay the cab,
And *I* had to tip the Porter.

He was hustled in, poor soul.
With three babies and two nurses :
I am glad, upon the whole,
I'm not travelling with Thyrsis.

THE M.P.'S ASPIRATION.

"The Idle Singer of an M.P. Day."

O H, let no sudden "Cry"
Deprive me of my seat,
Before the Speaker's eye
Has brought me to my feet !
Then let come what come may,
What matter if he go mad,
I shall have had my say.

Let the long Session endure
Till pair on pair be sorted,
So I can make quite sure
Of being *once* reported.
Then let come what come may,
Home-Ruler, Tory, Rad.,
I shall have had my say.

A WINTER GARDEN.

FAT children, and food-stuffs, and holly,
The tributes of Art to his sway,
And the struggle all round to be jolly,
Have vanished with Christmas away.

But, true to the season, the weather
Has banded again with the Parks,
To start on the war-path together
For a glacial epoch of larks.

When pale snows on ice-levels glinter,
What cheer for the sun-loving souls
Who seek to escape from the Winter
Unaided by skating or coals?

Though frost the broad gravel-path hardens,
The glasses are beaded with dew ;
Though it's desolate out in the gardens,
There's life in the greenhouse at Kew.

Good-bye to the reign of December,
To boughs that are leafless and wet ;
From the fires of the Summer an ember
Keeps warm the chrysanthemums yet.

A WINTER GARDEN.

Narcissus and tulip and lily
The siege of the season abide,
While the fog-demons chubby and chilly
Throng thriftless and baffled outside.

They stand the dull atmosphere scorning,
Like beautiful captives arow,
As white as the mists of the morning,
Or flushing like sunset on snow—

The dress of a fairy of fashion,
Whose skirt a wet rainbow has swept ;
The cheek of a pearl in a passion,
Whom a moonbeam has kiss'd while she slept.

Fast-frozen the grey grass beseeches
A token of hope for the lawn
From the high-tow'ring poplars and beeches,
The wind-whisper'd watchtow'rs of dawn.

But we turn from the climate of Sweden
To breathe the perennial balm,
Where aisles like the alleys of Eden
Are arch'd by the fronds of the palm.

And silence, unvex'd by the raw gust,
Benignant, and happy, and hot,
Is lull'd by that music of August,
The clank of the watering-pot,

Where gardeners, passive and pensive,
Their leisurely labours pursue,
And tropical trunks, comprehensive
Hide Flora's mild henchmen from view.

Though man, more and more, with his crass works
Profanes this sweet Goshen of trees,
Though Brentford, with whistles and gasworks,
Claims more than its share of the breeze,

So much of the fugitive Summer
Is caught in the crystalline cage,
That the thought of Sweet Spring, the newcomer,
Makes mirth of Jack Frost and his rage.

The river, again, in the twilight
Gleams silvery grey like a dove,
And birds twitter clear in the shy light
That dawns upon April and love.

UPON AMARYLLIS.

Causing him some displeasure.

THEY told her, when a wayward child,
Her temper to deter,
A bogey man, unkempt and wild,
Would run away with her ;
That richest quarry soonest falls
By simpering mien beguiled,
Till wide through fashion's gilded halls
Young Amaryllis smiled.

With frozen glee her growing fears
She struggled to restrain,
As through the uneventful years
She smiled, and smiled in vain.
And now she tries the infant plan,
And sulks the livelong day,
That so at least a bogey man
May carry her away.

BOHEMIAN BALLAD

Of the Society-Variety-Artiste.

YOU meaner beauties of the night,
That poorly satisfy the eye,
(Perhaps it would not be polite
The ladies' names to specify,)
Where are you when my love is nigh ?

Ye wallflowers that first appear,
That first appear and latest go,
Striking the surging crowd with fear
At your insipid anxious row,
What wonder that you find it slow ?

Ye chanters of the drawing-room,
That warble ballads of the day
So that you well deserve the doom
Of the weak heroes of your lay,
Wait till my love comes round your way !

For when my mistress shall appear
In the new playhouse I've designed,
A serio-tragi-comic Queen,
With all the latest fads combined,
Out of all sails she'll take the wind.

TO MAY.

(To cease Fooling.)

THE Winter is long, like the coal and gas bills, and
longer has grown the shamefaced day,
And some of the conscientious hedges are keeping the
feast, though it's far from gay ;
The grass is mown, and the meads are ready, the trees are
waiting, but where is May ?

What must the cuckoo be thinking of you, and what must
the nightingale,
Clinging at eve to his bloomy spray with the nightingale's
notion of tooth and nail ?
And his trills and ripples go down the wind, like the
shreds of a fairy sail.

The trees, like masts for the festal banners, are ready for
their array,
And the early comers, in wasted triumph, stream to the
stormy day,
While the blossoms are blown about like smoke, and the
under-leaves are grey.

But you pause in your wilful, wayward sport, with a tear
in your bold blue eye,
And the sun shines out, and the wind has dropp'd, and
the woodland voices cry,
With thronging rapture of faith unshaken, that the storms
have all gone by.

O May, shall we never see you coming, coming at last
to the patient earth,
With just the flush of the hawthorn petals, maiden shyness
on bridal mirth?
Think of your gardens and meads and rivers; scatter your
life on the woodland's dearth.

Postscriptum (when the wind has changed).

So, after all, you were only playing, hiding behind the
birch-crowned hill,
Where the light at evening is clearly golden, a blend of
sunbeam and daffodil,
And the rays through the new leaves drop like honey,
whence flowers their wine distil.

O wayward May, in your Mayward way you have
suddenly come to the world like love
In a wonder of beauty that baffles telling, on earth below
and in heaven above,
While the mellow call of the cuckoo mingles with the
deep content of the dove.

The mustard-and-cress in the kitchen garden gladdens the
householder's heart at morn,
And merry voices are heard at tennis, and the click of the
bat from the green is borne
Where the balls keep the cricket-net meshes swaying like
gusts on a field of corn.

On a votive peg we hang the ulster, and bask in the sun
in light array,
And the long, long Winter is scarce remembered like a
guest that tarried a day,
And we gravely believe your nightingale whisper, "It's
always like this in May."

AN AUTUMN LAY.

(*By a Belated Oarsman*).

COME, little maid, to the cracked piano,
The semi-grand in the coffee-room ;
We'll take your harmonies all *cum grano*,
For the strings vibrate like the crack of doom.
Over the lawn the flat clouds loom,
And when they lighten the rain falls faster ;
Like gossips who relish a friend's disaster,
The ducks quack loud in the rain-ruled gloom.

I've studied the cracks in the ceiling-plaster,
And the statuettes with their stolid leer,
And the landscape visions of some young master,
Who viewed the world through a haze of beer.
We've done as much with the hostel's cheer
As sane men may *in corpore sano* ;
So come, little maid, to the cracked piano.
Play us "*The Battle of Prague*," my dear.

The silence clouds, like a potion shaken,
As the limp strings jar to an ancient pain ;
Their light and sweetness no touch can waken,
And only the dregs of a tone remain.

The silk-sewn music with fray and stain
Swoons on the keys at the urgent stages,
And the little maid, as she props the pages,
Just murmurs, " Bother ! " and starts again.

And the streaming window again engages
The thoughts that stray from the field of Prague ;
And the moping birds in their gauze-girt cages,
And the wax-work fruits of a genus vague ;
And the flies that buzz like a lazy plague
Round the lone lorn jam, as it stands forsaken ;
And the varnished pike in the mill-pool taken
About the year that they fought at Prague.

But twilight falls, and its folds encumber
The misty mounds of the patient trees,
And sunset cheers with a touch of umber
The puddles of steel-grey Gruyère cheese.
And, interposing a little ease,
Our frail thoughts dally with false surmises
Of a morning as brilliant as mid July's is
With bravest sunshine and sweetest breeze.

A soothing silence the soul surprises,
For the little maid, like a hero true,
Has fought her fight through its poignant crises,
And shown what practice can dare and do.

And, tearing the moonlight in handfuls through,
A giant arm in the cloudland sombre
Scatters the light on a world of slumber,
Through snowy craters, from gulfs of blue.

HOW IT STRIKES THE CLOCK.

A CLOCK sees a lot who discreetly
Keeps his hands well in front of his face,
While the dancers are footing it featly,
Or resting securely and sweetly
In the holly-hung nook, which so neatly
Is not quite filled up by the case.

The candles stand straight in the sconces,
The boards like a looking-glass shine,
And lovingly rubicund John sees
To details of supper and wine.
An early arrival is taken
By radiant hostess in tow,
And, with confidence shamefully shaken,
He stands face to face with a row
Of flotsam and jetsam forsaken,
Whose heyday is gone long ago,
Who now lie in wait, like the Kraken,
To drag buoyant hopes down below.

There's a youth who would gladly annul it,
Though he sticks, now he's here, to his tryst,
With a collar that presses his gullet,
And a glove that is strained by his fist,

While the other, however he pull it,
All efforts is fain to resist.
And he knows he is certain to mull it,
As he gives a last desperate twist,
And the button flies off like a bullet,
And the glove curls away from his wrist.

There's a moody man out on the landing
Who bites his moustaches and swears,
For *he* is in solitude standing,
And *she's* sitting up on the stairs,
And without any glass he can well see
The story so prettily told,
That somebody else's is Elsie,
As dainty in manner and mould
As a shepherdess fashion'd at Chelsea
In charming choice china of old.

And the well-polished floor waxes shinier,
And feet that were tiny look tinier,
Like the white rose's wind-driven petals,
Or the lawn by the blown apple-tree ;
And the band to its business settles,
And the dance is all glory and glee,
And rubicund John's getting winier,
And smiles with a courtesy free.

Like a heavenly dredger the 'cello
Scoops all the soul out of a fellow,
Till wildly he worships the snowy-neck'd fay
In her virginal white, like the blossoming May,
With her curls than the woodbine woodbinier,
More precious than spell-guarded metals,
More bright than the eye of the day.

Then supper, with cracker and motto —
Oh, the power of those sibylline leaves—
When you say what it's much safer not to,
In an ear that too gladly receives.
And two surreptitious young creatures,
With the backs of their heads for their features,
Like a Janus admiring himself,
Turn years to a moment of blisses,
Of heart-breaking, heavenly kisses,
Regardless of prudence's preachers,
Papás, and position, and pelf.
And I turn on my time very slowly,
To give the young couple a chance,
For there's something in sorrow that's holy
To a soft-hearted clock at a dance.

Then the *chaperons* yawn, and regard me
With wistful and sleep-reddened eyes,

And the youngsters would gladly retard me,
As if it's my fault that time flies.
And dreaming of dances and marriages,
Of rivals, tobacco, or bed,
They seek in instalments their carriages,
And the vision of pleasure has fled,
And, quiet as the chamber of illness,
The ball-room grows dim and forlorn,
And I tick once again in the stillness,
As the wind brings the rain with the morn.

THE SOLDIER'S FEAR.

UPON the hill he turned,
To take a last fond look
At the alehouse, and the village church,
And the cottage by the brook.
To use his pocket-handkerchief,
While tears began to swell,
The soldier leant upon his sword—
It bent—and down he fell.

Amid the roar of battle,
The warrior's fellest blow
Has failed to penetrate the coat
That shields the vaunting foe.
But though the pliant steel may cost
Our bravest and our best,
Be sure the sword most yielding there
Has passed the strictest test.

POETRY AND PASTRY.

DEAR MR. PUNCH,

I HAVE written this poem about the mince pies, thinking it might be a good thing to have it printed. I have also put in something about Elsie, because she made them. I don't want my name put to the poem, because the fellows are sure to see *Punch*, and they don't understand things of this kind, and would very likely laugh at me. And one doesn't care to have one's friends' names humbugged about in the playground. Tom has looked over the verses, and says they are very good now he has invested them with artic merit, and he has put in some of his own, which are rather rot. He very nearly got the Newgate at Oxford, only he wasn't allowed to go in for the Exam. for it, as he had to be in training. I enclose a stamp, not necessarily for use, but as a quarantine of good faith.

Yours truly,

ERNEST PIEMAN.

(*My nom de plume.*)

P.S.—If you don't want to use the stamp, you might send it back to me.

THE POEM.

ELSIE went down to the kitchen
Where they made the Twelfth-Night feast,
And it's oh, she look'd so bewitching
That cook from her cooking ceas'd,
And let her make tart, pie, and cake,
And she wasted a pound at least
Of butter and flour ; but cook never look'd sour,
And she's sometimes a surly beast.
Oh, the yule log, and the ewe, ewe lamb,
But and the yew-tree grey ;
And a new year's coming up, my love,
For the old year's gone away.
[*Tom made this up. He says it gives a cachet.*]

She look'd so lovely as she sway'd
The paste with dainty fingers,
That round the pastry that she made
An endless glamour lingers,
Like the hidden light of a swallow's flight,
Or the silence of perfect singers.

How dull and beas'ly are our schools,
And starting is the worst day ;

They always have new-fangled rules.
And give us French the first day ;
And Elsie's face will fill the place,
Like a *mirage* when you're thirsty.

Aunt Posy says that horrid boy
Will kill himself with eating,
But little wots she of the joy
That sets my pulses beating :
It's not the tart that shakes my heart,
It's Elsie, pretty sweeting.

And why not die ? What hope is mine ?
She's now five years my senior.
In vain bright eyes upon you shine
If rivals come between you ;
But the holidays were all divine,
And Elsie was their *genia*.*

Yes ! How can boy make better end,
An end more sweet and sudden,
Than, smiling, die of Elsie's pie
After a course of pudding,

* This is a female good genius.

With teeth fast fix'd in the mince she mix'd
And her pastry white and wooden.
Oh, the yule log, and the ewe, ewe lamb
But and the yew tree grey ;
And a new year's coming up, my love,
For the old year's gone away.

THE GREAT ADVENTURER.

DEAR MR. PUNCH,

THIS is what has happened. She and I are really seriously attached to each other. She would make an adorable wife, and I'm sure I'm designed for domestic happiness, as I'm always falling in love, which is quite beastly. It keeps me continually miserable : first, when the girls don't care for me ; and secondly, when they do. Bogie (I call her Bogie because she has such beautiful red hair) is a perfect girl, and we should certainly be very happy ; but when, in the most gentlemanly way, I told her father about it, he asked me a lot of impertinent questions about my income, which was really in the worst possible taste, as he knows very well that I haven't any. However, I've written a poem, which, if not entirely original, is adapted to circumstances with some skill, and I think you will own that, even if it doesn't scan, it is quite true.

The people who review books are always asking, Why are there so many Minor Poets ? I can tell them one reason. It's because there are so many sordid fathers of the only girl a fellow ever really loves. He hinted something about an adventurer—like a man in a farce at a

matinée—so I call my poem, *Love the Adventurer* (only, unfortunately, he doesn't). Here, however, is the effort :—

LOVE THE ADVENTURER.

WHEN Love seeks a business-man's daughter,
His hopes he will dash

By asking how he means to support her

Without any cash :

The hat that is sat on

You may have it blocked next day,

But when the old man tries *that* on

Love must get out of the way.

You may warble love-songs in an agreeable baritone,

You may wear small gloves of a mild canary-tone,

You may write for the papers,

Or have evolved the plot of a really new and original
play ;

But you'll only lose love's labours ;

You *can't* make him see things your way.

You may train the eagle

To stoop to your fist ;

(Though it's quite another thing to inveigle

The creature to desist)

You may move (with a crowbar)

The lioness to give o'er her prey ;

But there is really no bar

To the inquisitiveness of a proposed father-in-law, in
the matter of prospects and pay.

LOVELACE LACKLAND.

ON THE RECEIPT OF A PHOTOGRAPH.

AND is my hair as thin as that,
And are my feet so big,
And am I really getting fat,
With eyes like slumbrous pig ?
And does the smile, wherewith I thought
To show the peace within,
Appear with wreathèd folly fraught
Like this insensate grin ?

Small wonder when, amid the dance,
I seek the young and fair,
They ask, with soft, confiding glance,
“ Oh, *would* you mind a square ? ”
While rage and wounded vanity,
Like mingled powders fizz,
I cry, “ Is this dark daub like me ? ”
And conscience cries, “ It is ! ”

Ah ! like the splash that makes you mad,
And Amaryllis scream,
When in swift launch the careless cad
Goes hurling up the stream,

Or when the cloudland crystals fleck
The air with feathery mazes,
A snowball bursts upon your neck
And makes you jump like blazes, --

Or when the booby-trap is sprung
Above your chamber door,
Or when the chairless weight is flung,
Unchecked, upon the floor,
Or like the street-door's sudden slam,
Such is the shock to me,
Contrasting what I really am
With what I hoped to be.

Farewell the dreams of fond romance,
Of wedding-bells and dresses,
The dear discomforts of the dance,
The fancied fondness of a glance,
False smiles and doubtful tresses.
Henceforth I spurn the worldling-crew,
Renounce my cousin Mabel,
And yield myself heart-whole unto
The pleasures of the table.

THE OLD TELEPHONE.

(A Ballad of the day.)

IT stands as of yore in the dear dark corner,
But the dust has gather'd, the voice has flown ;
There, like a little forlorn Jack Horner,
It lingers, unlook'd-for, the old telephone.
The blinds in the office hang yellow and slanting,
The sun strikes mottled athwart the pane,
And ever a low lone voice is chanting,
From days evanish'd, an old refrain :
Ring, ring-a-ring ! Are you there ? Who are you ;
What do you want ? Ring-a-ring ! Are you there ?
Answer, O love ! While I rest for a bar, you
Murmur your numbers, my fair, my fair !

Ring, ring-a-ring ! Like the joy-bells chiming ;
Whirr ! Like a coffee-mill talking alone ;
Silence ! Like poets who sleep at their rhyming ;
An answer softer than cushat's moan.
Yes, for a voice on the desert of business
Fell like the dew, though the face was unknown ;
And ever my brain with delirious dizziness
Reels when I think of the old telephone.

Ah ! but the world whirls wearily round me,
And I with the weary world am whirl'd ;
Should it suddenly stop, it could scarce confound me,
If, some bright morning, the angels found me
Recklessly round the lamp-posts curl'd.
But, in garden old, or in window'd minster,
From chordless organ, or frozen bird,
From bachelor bold or blushing spinster,
Such soul-sweet music was never heard.
In love's bright play-bill I largely star you ;
I hear you ever, my unseen fair ;
Ring, ring-a-ring ! Are you there ? Who are you ?
And echo sobs—There is no one there !

AN ANGEL'S VISIT ;

Or, The Artist's First Commission.

A N hour ago and the world was grey,—
A thoroughly Bloomsbury kind of day,—
When you think of the bills that you cannot pay
And turn from beautiful thoughts away,
Like a sulky child from kisses,
And wonder how poets sweet things can say
Of a world so chilly and hard and grey,
Where the wise are gloomy, and fools are gay
With their sorrowful, sordid blisses.

My hopes were low, and my heart was sore,
For a soul's mosaic litter'd the floor,
While vile pot-boilers the easels bore,
And the kettle croon'd of the cheap tea-store,
On smouldering coals that waved of yore
In a graveyard antediluvian,
When there came a tap at the studio-door—
Such golden music ne'er heard before
The treasure-seeker who strikes a crore
Of buried rupees, or the hidden ore
Of Incas in vaults Peruvian.

The rain was lashing the windows high,
As if in spite of the brilliant sky
That lives in my picture of last July,
My holiday record of last July,
 My only relic of Summer,
When a wide-eyed welcome of brightest sun
Spread all the room over, and dwelt upon
The hyacinth's clusters of cinnamon
 To welcome the sweet new-comer.

Then the veteran chair with a missing limb,
And all that was common and mean and grim,
Grew suddenly seemly, and fine and trim,
 Like courtliest old-world lovers ;
For a luminous beauty around her flowed,
And her face like the waking of morning glowed,
And her hair like crag in a hollow road
 Where a leafy sunlight hovers.

Now I hear but her nightingale melody,
Though her brother, I think, talked more than she,
And they didn't say half as much to me
 As they found to say to each other ;
But every tone of her crisp, clear notes
Like a water-lily on silence floats,
Though dizzied memory vainly quotes
 What she came about with her brother.

She has taken the loneliness all away,
And only the grace and the comfort stay ;
And the light that she leaves is so pure and bright
That rain and wretchedness merely make
A beautiful rainbow for her sake,
Who found the room in a doleful plight,
 And a life hung over with shadows,
And out of her bounty has made it gay,
As the lowliest cottage is brave in May
With the cowslip bell, and the hawthorn spray,
 And all the spoil of the meadows.

And I settle down to the sober light
When the glory is tidied away for the night,
And shy sweet odours can take the air—
Too delicate for the noonday glare
And the romping games of the burly bee—
 And, marring the calmness greatly,
Hard chafers suddenly seize your hair,
And bats zig-zag like a tailless kite,
And solemn owls with their silent flight
Winnow the dimness that soon will flee
 As the red moon rises stately.

A CITY IDYL.

“ **T**HERE’S a corner in pork, and a starling
Is building her nest in the corner ;
And it’s oh, (it is always oh,) my darling,
There is hope in the heart of your City Jack Horner,
Who sits in the corner to pull out a plum.
Then hey, for the bonny bright day that will come
For you and for me, my darling !

“ Money was hard, and your father was hard—
Yarely is piping the starling—
And we were depress’d as coffee or lard,
But firm as copper, my darling !

“ And your mother was brisk as inquiries for wheat—
Cotton is weak in the glooming—
For she thought that love’s call we should fail to meet,
But like shard-borne beetles at twilight sweet
The Jan Van Beers went booming.

“ And bacon closed with a steady tone,
Like choristers clearly quiring,
And hogs were ten points up, my own,
Like the solemn pine on the mountain lone,
Or pinnacles, cloud-aspiring.

“ And closing prices, and stocks and shares
Are fair with a future pleasure,
As I wander, a victim to shocks and stares,
In my mooning hours of leisure.

“ For tin is as quiet as eventide,
And ribs like the sun declining ;
But rails rule firm as my winsome bride,
And love looks up like mining.

“ And it's oh, my love, my love,
And it's oh, my dear, my dear !
I've done good work with the corner in pork,
And better with Jan Van Beer.”

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the bulls and bears
While the still morn went out in shirtings grey ;
He touch'd the tender stops of booms and scares,
With eager thought warbling his Mincing Lay.
He thought without alarm of settling day,
Nor jumped with panic fear when prices fell
Crashing, but every eve he took his way
To Tooting, all his tale of love to tell
While the stars rose, and wild swans left their haunts,
Stags sought the pools, and the grand elephants
Waved their Grand Trunks aloft, and all was well.

TO MY HAIRDRESSER.

(Not to make Conversation.)

YOU tell me that the day is fine.
You say my hair is getting thin,
Anon you proffer Smearoline,
Or comment on my tender skin ;
Good friend, for goodness' sake forbear,
I prithee only cut my hair.

For think—a shy, retiring man,
I shun the toilet's public rite,
Until my cousins—cousins can—
Reproach me for a perfect fright.
And must I bear, too shy to snub,
The babble of your Toilet Club ?

I know, for every day for years
I've scann'd the glass with careful eye,
Whether the heaven clouds or clears,
Whether the roads are wet or dry ;
Indeed, indeed, I do not care
Whether you think it foul or fair.

And why observe with honied zest,
What men by many phrases call,
That phase which must be dubb'd at best
Unduly intellectual?
What though my loftier temples shine,
That is no business of thine.

Think you, when, in your wrapper swathed,
I cower beneath the harrowing comb,
Or crouch, in creaming lather bathed,
Beneath the hose's numbing foam,
Or bear, while tears unbidden gush,
The rigours of your softest brush,—

Think you, at such a time as this,
I care to hear, with nerves unstrung,
The dirge of bygone days of bliss
Trip lightly from a stranger's tongue?
What if your victim stood at bay,
And told you *you* were bald or grey?

The head you handle like a block,
And brand with slighting comments cool,
Has bravely borne the battle's shock,
And starr'd the grey old walls at school;
Has sprained a Bishop's reverend wrist,
And badly bruised a Judge's fist.

They were not Judge and Bishop then,
But only chubby, scrubby boys ;
And now they're grave and reverend men.
I value those remember'd joys,
And grieve that evil should be said
About my own, my only head.

Your politics are nought to me ;
I'll keep my views about the weather :
I only wish we could agree
That I am neither wood nor leather.
Be gentle ; 'tis the nobler plan,
And stint your chatter, if you can.

THEME WITH VARIATIONS.

SEATED to-day at the organ,
Ready to play what you please,
I gaze like an infinite Gorgon,
Till you feel hardly at ease.
Hark to the sough of the bellows
Storing harmonious gales,
When the pipes speak to their fellows—
Well, I will play you the scales.

Out of this simple material
Music's vast multitude throngs,
Festal and plagal and ferial
Operas, dirges, and songs.
Here is a clue to unravel,
Here is a theme never fails ;
A switchback unending to travel
Over the smooth-running scales.

Hark, how we rush up the gamut,
A ladder in fieriest need ;
And now, like a hind who says, "Dam'ut !"
We play very low down indeed.

Up, like a storm-beaten packet,
Down, and the passenger pales :
Here comes the steward thro' the racket—
Gaily I play you the scales.

Off goes the right hand, convulsively,
Up to the manual's end :
Left hand pursues it impulsively,
Like an unauthorized friend.
Fashion's caprices may criticize
Aught of its standard that fails ;
Fearing scorn's finger nor pity's eyes,
Boldly I practise the scales.

This is a wedding march—*trousseau*,
Presents, and favours, and rice :
Now 'tis the Dream of a Rousseau
Changed to a waltz in a trice.
Thus unencumber'd, indefinite,
Each his own melody hails,
Each sees the hand of a *chef* in it,
Safe in the haven of scales.

Some may interpret them leatherly,
Thunder of fort and of fleet ;
Others will warble them weatherly,
Milkmaid and ferry complete ;

Vesperish, cloister'd, and choirsome,
 Heimweh with mill-wheels and dales,
Frankly unmeaning and tiresome,
 All are embraced by the scales.

Trade, with its spacious surroundings,
 Spices, and bullion, and bales,
Argosies, sinkings, and soundings,
 Postage for far-away mails;
Justice with eyes in a bandage,
 Fish who are chivied by whales—
Ah, you might live to a grand age
 Ere you could play out the scales.

Brennus and Rome, and its history,
 Alpenstocks, axes, and veils,
Dragons and creatures of mystery
 Swingeing their horrible tails.
Jockey, and boxer, and rower,
 Men who climb walls out of gaols,
Butterflies—bother that blower !
 He's let the wind out of the scales.

TOMMY'S TURK.

YOUNG TOMMY had a turban'd Turk,
A model toy, a birthday token ;
You wound him up, and watch'd him work—
Till he got broken.

His head would wag, his eyes would roll,
He moved his arms with gesture stately,
And played a dozen antics droll,
Which pleased us greatly.

The idol of the chattering crowd,
He acquiesced in every notion,
And with unfailing tact allow'd
Our deep devotion.

He ruled, a despot kind and strong,
The nursery's turbulent tribesmen swaying,
Till something with his works went wrong,
And he ceased playing.

None can tell how. His subjects set
Such store upon his fellow-feeling,
That they were likely to forget
Mere wires and wheeling.

Did Willy's killing kindness press
Down the reluctant Paynim's thrapple
Those crumbs of cake, and watercress,
And bits of apple?

Did Cissie, curious child of Eve,
Seek to explore his inmost being,
And, frightened, her researches leave
Unblest with seeing?

Or Mab, who duty never shirks,
An advocate of Western polish,
Had dreams perchance of teaching Turks
To speak in Dollish.

For all the dolls at home can speak,
And, on the slightest provocation,
Engage, with ventriloquial squeak,
In conversation.

And she, belike, essay'd to teach
The unresponsive Asiatic,
And caused, instead of answering speech,
Reserve rheumatic.

He sits, serene as other Turks,
In faultless Oriental vesture ;
But never since they hurt his works
Has changed a gesture.

O Tommy's Turk, your fate and mine
Are by a mystic bond united,
And neither of us gives a sign
Of being blighted.

On Southern shores the waters fair
Murmur their office pure and priestly,
And Elsie flirts and dances there ;—
It's simply beastly.

Unmoved I meet my daily lot,
Mechanically eat my dinner,
Indifferently lose a " pot,"
Or back the winner ;

Waltz with dear Mrs. Bumblebee,
Although no normal arm can span her—
Fat, fair, and *fortiter in re*,
And suave in manner.

Or to Miss Jonquil on the stairs
Where Elsie shone a drift of whiteness,
Pour out the unexpressive pray'rs
Of pure politeness.

And if our fingers chance to touch,
If I gaze fondly at her tresses,
It is because their taste is much
The same in dresses.

I'll hie away to Gamlingay,
Chester-le-Street, or Thorpe-le-Soken ;
I cannot work ; like Tommy's Turk,
My springs are broken.

A BALLAD OF BETROTHAL.

I AM beloved ; not a doubt of it,
Goal of my longing for years !
Now, how the deuce to get out of it,
Minus reproaches and tears.
Not that my passion has wavered
Since I first plunged over ears
Deep in the well of illusion,
Deeper than plummet e'er sounded,
And, with ecstatic confusion,
Words which I spoke to you quavered,
Laden with burden unbounded,
Faltering tentative " dears."

Once you would chirp like a linnet,
Now you sit silent as Fate—
Baffled, I muse for a minute,
Then I remember I'm late.
Brown I have often kept kicking
His heels, in a comfortless state,
He never gave me reproaches,
Only, " You *are* a nice fellow."

He's made me miss trains and coaches,
Counting the clock's steady ticking,
I don't turn sulky and yellow,
I only whistle and wait.

Once you flushed furtively, shyly,
Love in your eyes was aglow,
When, by some stratagem wily,
I stole a march on the foe.
Now that we're publicly plighted,
Why should you harass me so?
Changing our sunshine to thunder?
If other duties should call, love,
Why should you icily wonder
When I would greet you delighted,
Why I come near you at all, love,
Cold as a lady of dough?

Beware, O Amanda, I pray you,
The scourge of the stay-at-home spouse!
No longer constrain'd to obey you,
I'd stick like a leech to my vows.
No office to seek in the mornings,
No visiting stables and cows,
No afternoon club with the papers,
No home-coming, welcome and cheery,

But checking of butchers and drapers,
And kitchen commotions, and "warnings"—
If you shrink from a picture so dreary,
Don't train me too much to the house!

Lady, I cannot be true to you,
If like a knife you come down,
Keen to exact what is due to you,
Killing romance with a frown.
Start we a sensible "chummery,"
Such as men live in together,
Suited for all sorts of weather,
Free from this Valentine flummery,
Each with the length of the tether.

BALLADS OF TO-DAY.

FURNIVAL'S INN.

(By *Houquet Walkère.*)

I N your still garden, when the bells are chiming,
When the rooks clamour, and the crocus blows,
And house-boat snails the border-bricks are sliming,
And light and shadow line the lawn in rows,
Think how, amid the roar of City traffic,
I make heart's music to the jarring din,
And spin Alcaic, Elegiac, Sapphic,
Taking mine ease in Furnival's Old Inn.

*"Furnival's Inn, and Furnival's outt,
Furnival's grown a gadabout ;
Furnival's here, and Furnival's there,
Thorough the crescent, athwart the square ;
Furnival's off, and Furnival's on,
Whither, ye Shepherds, has Furnival gone ?"*

Rolls there a 'bus by, or careers a hansom,
Rattles the peaceful Pickford's chariot-van,
Love still, with smiling eyes, will pay the ransom,
Still chant serene what man hath made of man.

Though on their prancing destriers the Templars
Stay not the traffic now in Fetter Lane,
The Mail-cart Knight reveres his great exemplars,
And drives his palfrey half as fast again.

Still, through a conflorescent spilth of splendour,
Vanquishing Venice and the lim lagoon,
The heart will yearn for England's April tender,
Singing, Go, rill, along with sober boon.
And, like some great Express to Bath or Grantham,
Gleams of your voice that day you came to tea
Mingle for ever with the old-world anthem,
Sung on May morns to Tudor minstrelsie,

*"Furnival's Inn, and Furnival's outt,
Furnival's grown a gadabout ;
Furnival's here, and Furnival's there,
Over the crescent, and through the square ;
Furnival's off, and Furnival's on,
Whither, ye Nymphs, has the malapert gone?"*

DRIFTING.

(By Houquet Walkère).

“WILL we walk a little faster?” said the Miller to the Maid.

“There’s the Cooper close behind us, and a Miller’s ne’er afraid ;

But ’twould make the laddie’s heart beat sair beneath the chestnut shade,

If he saw us walk together in the hey-day, yeo-ho weather,

Since hand in hand a week agoe wi’ you the Cooper stray’d.”

“Oh, Miller, Miller, Miller,” the winsome lass replied,

“In flow’ring rush and meadow-sweet that grow the stream beside,

The ferry-boy his ferry-boat against the bank has tied ;

Then, sweetheart blithe and merry, you shall row me o’er the ferry ;

Though Cooper John is cross and sad, the stream is deep and wide.”

He has row'd her o'er the river ; they have climbed the
fencing slight,
Where Lettice fair, the laundry lass, has hung the kirtle
white,
And in Farmer Giles's clover-field their troth they're fain
to plight ;
But the brindled bull was feeding, broke in upon their
pleading,
And toss'd them o'er the palings in the golden evening
light.

Up to the star-land sailing,
Over the pleasaunce paling,
It is merrie, merrie, merrie in the crimson evening glow ;
Birds in the orchard housing,
Kine in the clover browsing,
And a ferry-boat is drifting fast where deep weir-waters
flow.

TEDDINGTON LOCK.

By Archie Smiler.

'TIS noon, joyous noontide, by Isleworth clock,
As we speed with the tide up to Teddington Lock.
So fast and so full is the bountiful flood,
Forgotten and hidden are shallows and mud.
The sun flashes up from each eddying swirl,
The trees keep their tresses in crispest of curl ;
Each glance is a laugh, and each word is a song,
As we strongly and steadily paddle along.
And the pains of the past and the future we mock,
As we urge our light shallop to Teddington Lock.

There's a call, like a blackbird's who sits on a branch,—
The mellow salute of an on-coming launch.
Our shallop discreetly gets out of the way,
As it drives through the water all billows and spray ;
And it brays like a donkey, and crows like a cock,
As it proudly precedes us in Teddington Lock.

Ah ! why does my rubicund countenance blanch,
As I scan the white gossamer gowns on the launch ?
Is it love that thus claims to be honoured at sight ?
Would I woo, would I win, those fair women in white ?

No, gladly I'd sink through the floor of the boat,
Regardless of whether the rest of us float.
The sunlight is dulled, there's a nip in the breeze,
And the curl is gone out of the hair of the trees,
And the Lock fills as slowly as ever it can
As I gaze on a waist I no longer may span,
And the past shakes like jelly at memory's knock—
I have met my old sweetheart in Teddington Lock !

She sits so serenely unconscious and cool,
While I feel like a culprit and look like a fool ;
At the blink of her een I am fain to forget
The captious caprice of the cruel coquette,
And all our fond follies come back in a flock,
As I suddenly see her in Teddington Lock.

You may row on the river, or sail on the sea,
You may sparkle at dinner or five o'clock tea,
You may revel at Ramsgate, or sulk at Southend,
You may swagger at Southsea, at Yarmouth unbend,
You may crush your fine feelings with business cares,
And blight your romance with political airs ;
But the past springs to light like a jack-in-the-box,
When you meet your old sweethearts on launches in locks.

PATERFAMILIAS LOQUITUR.

THE holidays are o'er ! no more we see
Boots in all places where no boots should be ;
No more the hungry brood sweeps clear the platter
With the perpetual grace of cheery chatter ;
No more the bolster battle-cries are borne
Through the warm slumbers of the early morn.
No more indignant James comes in to tell
How master Tom has stormed his citadel,
And, scorning covert threat and suasion soft,
Rules for an hour the monarch of the loft.
Once more 'tis safe the shrubby paths to tread
Without a javelin hurtling by one's head ;
No longer lurk behind the orchard trees
White-headed Indians, chubby Soudanese ;
And neighbouring pigs wallow with wonted grace,
Free from the terrors of the sudden chase.
Again we face the frost, without dismay,
Lest we be called to skate an hour ere day,
Or with a book endure a day-long fall
Secure from lawless cricket in the hall.
Now in the servants' mystic realm again
Their ancient order and decorum reign ;

Yet can I read in Bibb's, the butler's, eye
A latent sorrow for the larks gone by.
Unruffled now in temper, and in look
Sedate and calm once more is Mrs. Cook.
Yet all her larder's treasures she'd explore,
And spend her skill to greet the boys once more.
The coachman, as a Lord Chief Justice grave,
His loved solemnity no more must waive ;
Majestic silence seals his lips, and yet
I know his dignity is half regret.
For now the lords of home's fair pastures free
Plunge in the schoolroom's fierce democratic ;
Now in reluctant ears the school-bell sounds ;
On the soaked grass once more the football bounds ;
The home-sick novice hears the horrid thud,
And headlong prints his flannels in the mud.
Now ponder sullen brows o'er Homer's page,
While luckless masters share Achilles' rage.
And rising scholars mourn their studious lot,
And brand the classic bards as "awful rot."
Ah ! though at home the endless clamours cease,
There is much desert to a little peace.
Come, Easter, come, to Pater and to boys,
And bring them back with all their tricks and noise.

TO CHLOE.

To have some more Supper.

I ASK not again to encircle that waist,
Though prettier never a girdle has graced ;
That our feet in the fetters of rhythmical bars
May twinkle together, like hide-and-seek stars ;
I look not again for the flush on thy cheek,
The eyes that of mystical maidenhood speak,
The rabblesome sunlight of clustering curls,
And the dancing delight of the dearest of girls ;
I seek not to bind you for waltzes far on,
When one, or the other, or both, may be gone,
Nor to throw others over, with falsehood and pain,—
But let us, my fair one, have supper again.

Should I slip in alone I should quail at the eye
Of the waiter who served me with turkey and pie,
Who plenished my plate with the choicest of fare,
And filled up my glass with assiduous care.
But happy and bold with a chivalrous grace,
With you for my object I'll make for a place.

I do not desire you to drink or to eat,
Coquette with the Clicquot, or toy with a sweet,
But I, gentle lady, with might and with main,
Will really and truly have supper again.

Then leave we the Arabs, Venetians, and Japs,
The satin-skinned beauties in charity caps,
The tricksy young pinafores creatures in socks,
And the slim scintillations of ankles and clocks.
The sweet fishermaid from some myrtle-clad coast,
The statue diviner than sculpture can boast.
The youth in a velvet of willow-leaf hue,
The dashing Hussar in his medals and blue ;
Like pattern in paper on waiting-room wall,
Like crests of the billows, that rise as they fall,
Love's fancies in endless procession advance,
But supper stands firm in the swirl of the dance.

For you and for me in the wonderful crowd,
Nay, let us confess it, some fancy cries loud,
And the swoop of the music, like gales of the spring,
Brings tidings of summer to come on its wing.
But I find that the costume of Francis the First
Develops inordinate hunger and thirst ;

So seek we the supper-room, silent and cool,
With the Bandit and Milkmaid, the Fairy and Fool,
And list to the soul-racking music unmoved,
And eat unmolested, and laugh unreprieved.
For the world it is weary, and true-love is vain,
So let us, I pray you, have supper again.

VERY EARLY SPRING.

(By a Mixed-Impressionist.)

THE day lengthens
In crocus and daffodil light ;
The cold strengthens,
Till one's wife is a regular fright ;
Blinding and choking,
Like a storm in a desert of sand,
Is the dry joking
Of the well-meaning mud in the Strand.

Snowdrops tranquil,
Glad of their snowdrop lot !
Fragrant jonquil,
Hyacinths, sixpence a pot !
Yellow in Jaffa
Oranges, juicy and sweet ;
Yellow in daffa-
downdillies sold in the street !
Copper and amber
Over St. Clement's Danes
The clouds clamber,
Then—oh, my hat !—how it rains !

An hour's journey
By a leisurely local train,
And, furzy and ferny,
Here is the home again.
The tree-tops feather
The sharp, cold line of the sky ;
In the windy weather
The clacketty mill-sails fly.
The brown furrows
Follow the sturdy team ;
On sandy burrows
Patches of sunlight gleam.
(The breezy vision
Is banished from fancy's eye
By fierce collision
With a corpulent passer-by.)

Like solemn Hindoos,
The night-clouds are swathed in white,
And the shop-windows
Shame them with shameless light ;
But day lingers
Over the weary land,
With wan fingers
Soothing its sleeping hand,

As a lone mother,
 Weary with anguish wild,
Her grief will smother
 Nursing a neighbour's child.

THOUGHTS IN A GARDEN.

THE air with sunlight is alive,
The sappy boughs are supple,
And every seat that's meant for five
Can only hold a couple.

The soft wind warbles like a dream,
The supple boughs are sappy,
And all the scatter'd couples seem
Mysteriously happy.

His mate the mellow mavis greets,
Sappy the supple boughs are,
And all the pairs on all the seats
Exchanging silent vows are.

Mute eloquence of lowly love !
Sweet void, by words unfillable !
Convention's fetters far above,
They need not breathe a syllable !

She contemplates her o'er-teemed gloves,
Her boots' conspicuous newness ;
While *he* the circumambient loves
Surveys through smoke-wreaths' blueness.

Ah, would that I and Geraldine,
Each a Supreme Caucasian,
Could walk like them upon the green,
Unvex'd by conversation.

But I and plighted Geraldine,
When forth we fare together,
First do full justice to the scene,
And then discuss the weather.

The weather ! We whose spirits bold
Feel every star-beat tingle,
Gather the moonlight's broken gold
From the foam-curdled shingle ;

Throb strangely when the new leaves shoot,
As though too tightly bodied,
And wave a courteous salute
When breezy trees have nodded !

O tyrant custom ! Happy they
Who heed not, nor obey it ;
Who, having nothing left to say,
Simply sit still and say it.

They lounge at ease beneath the trees,
Or pace the paths together,
And let the well-contented breeze
Whisper about the weather.

SUBURBAN LOVE-SONG.

THE blacks float down with a lazy grace,
Hey, how the twirtle-birds twitter !
And softly settle on hands and face ;
And the shards in the rockery glitter.

The boughs are black and the buds are green—
Hey, how the twitter-birds twirtle !
And Cicely over the trellis-screen
Is bleaching her summer kirtle.

The mustard and cress (can they grow apart—
Those twin-souls, cress and mustard ?)
Are springing apace ; they have made such a start
That the pattern is rather fluster'd :

For I made a device in the moist dark mould,
In the shape of A's and S's,
In capital letters, firm and bold,
I sow'd my mustard and cresses.

And I traced a heart and a true-love knot
In a geometrical pattern,
And it seems to have run to I can't tell what,
For Flora has proved a slattern.

Or the sparrows, whose chirpings at daybreak shrill,
Like the voice of a giant Cicala,
Of most of the letters have had their will,
In a vegetarian gala.

Here comes no nymph where the blue waves lisp
On the white sands' gleaming level,
Where the sharp light strikes on the laurel crisp,
And flowers in the cool shade revel.

But the garden shrubs are as fair to me
As pine, and arbutus, and myrtle
That grow by the shores of the Grecian sea,
Where deathless nightingales twirtle.

And the little house, with its *suites* complete,
And the manifold anti-macassar,
And the *châlet* cage, whence he greets the street—
Mec puellæ passer--

Are fairer than aught that the sun is above
In the world as much as I've seen of it ;
For the little house is the realm of love,
And my sweet little girl is the queen of it.

A RUMINATION.

(By a Loafer of Nature.)

HOW vainly men with toil themselves amaze
To justify their scanty holidays.
Far happier he who, when he will can range,
And find a holiday in every change.
'Tis early spring, and, weary of the town,
Where bricks and mortar keep their wintry frown,
I seek the waking woods, the meadows fair,
Where countless larks are taking boundless air.
The creaking wagon half a mile away
Sounds through the stillness of the hazy day,
And cocks clear-crowing from the dwindled stack
Recall the legends of the House of Jack.

Like living boulders, in the sweet thick turf,
Where daisies break the green in soundless surf,
Whisking with lazy tails the flies away,
The kine enjoy their livelong holiday.
Along the sloping field the shining share
Turns the rich earth to the rejoicing air ;
The smallest fretting of each pencill'd spray
Shows clear against sun-saturated grey,

Which waits, light-laden, till a breeze comes by
To spill the sunlight all about the sky.
Like blotting-paper of serener spheres,
Earth soaks the sunshine as the heaven clears,
And in the clean new light the dazzling ducks
Quack glad Amens to April's *Fiat Lux* !

At early dawn's unseasonable hour
The legion-sparrow tests his vocal pow'r,
Pierces with myriad chirp the sleeping ear,
And scares his breakfast, if First Worms could hear.
Strange that the rural sun should rise so long
Before the kettle tunes its matin song ;
Yet I forgive the choristers in brown,
And revel in the thought, " I'm out of town !"
Now the maturer day the mind invites
To ponder pleasantly on past delights.
Here is the loft, where spite of heave and choke,
On wet half-holidays we used to smoke.
There is the pond, with downy willows girt,
Wherein we often fell and took no hurt
There on still nights a paper fleet would float,
An end of candle burning in each boat ;
Then flew the pebbles from the threaten'd shore,
Till the frail navy sank to rise no more.

Then in each brook and tree for miles around
Playmates in feathers or in fur we found,
Studied their ways ; and, braving broken bones,
Bore off the eggs, and stock'd the nest with stones ;
Set the brisk terrier on the bright-eyed rat,
And hurled the javelin at the flying cat,
Caught in brick traps the warblers of the wood,
Cooked them *impromptu*, and pronounced them good.
Oh, vivid joys of youth ! Maturer age
Sighs at the ashes of that noble rage,
Leans on the gate, and hears the fragrant kine
Breathe frequent grace, while they unceasing dine.
While long-legged lambs their patient mothers tease,
Or crop the grass devoutly on their knees.
Though now a song can close at hand be heard,
Nor raise a frantic wish to catch the bird,
Grant sun and shade, and 'tis enough for me,
Like the unharass'd kine to browse, and be !

AN UNAPPRECIATED GENIUS.

I'M seen at every Private View,
No *Matinée's* complete without me,
And people whom I never knew
Talk quite familiarly about me.
With every post the cards pour in,
At every crush my face is seen,
A show-face on a show-body ;
And eager paragraphs appear
About my movements all the year,
And yet I'm really Nobody.

The madman of the master's pen
Exulted in his hidden madness ;
The homage of my fellow-men
Kindles my soul to kindred gladness.
For Rank, with unexpressive eye,
And vapid Fashion, collar'd high,
And Beauty, in her low body,
Pay ever-growing court to one
Who stands at gaze to watch the fun,
And knows that he is Nobody.

Oh, were I but an actor-wight,
Or minnesinger sentimental,
Or artist in a threadbare plight,
Or ranter burdened by his rental !
The social favours of my lot
Might make a heart of ice wax hot,
A snow-man's in a snow-body ;
But I—I simply go my way,
No fame to reap, no bills to pay,
An independent Nobody.

Mysterious Fate ! I'm "taken up,"
Not even such a lot desiring ;
I dine, I dance, I flirt, I sup,
Vires eundo still acquiring.
I know that Fashion's mystic laws
Would frank with equal lack of cause
A rag-doll with a tow body ;
Yet, 'mid the "set's" exclusive joys,
The thought my honesty annoys,
That, after all, I'm Nobody !

A BALLAD OF SALAD.

I CANNOT eat the red, red rose,
I cannot eat the white ;
In vain the long laburnum glows,
Vain the camellia's waxen snows,
The lily's cream of light.

The lilac's clustered chalices
Proffer their bounty sweet
In vain ! Though very good for bees,
Man with unstinted yearning sees,
Admires, but cannot eat.

Give me the lettuce that has cool'd
Its heart in the rich earth,
Till every joyous leaf is school'd
To crisply-crinkled mirth ;

Give me the mustard and the cress,
Whose glistening stalklets stand
As silver-white as nymphs by night
Upon the moonlit strand ;

The winking radish, round and red,
That like a ruby shines ;
And the faint blessing, onion-shed,
Whene'er Lucullus dines.

The wayward endive's curling head,
Cool cucumber sliced small,
And let the imperial beet-root spread
Her purple over all.

Though shrinking poets still prefer
The common floral fashions,
With buds and blossoms hymn their Her,
These vegetable loves would stir
A flint-heart's mineral passions !

PROTHALAMIUM.

COME, fragrant dawn and tender,
For the birds twitter low ;

A wakening sunbeam send her,
Who forth in bridal splendour
At the high noon shall go.

The day-rim riseth slow,
The day when she shall render
Her life for weal and woe
Unto her lover's keeping ;
Ah, dreamlessly she's sleeping,
While the birds twitter low.

The light comes stealing shyly
Through the dim house of rest ;
An infant sunbeam slyly
Creeps smiling to her breast,
But, being blest too highly,
Dies in that dainty nest ;
For mists with vapour pearly
Blindfold the prying throng,
And quell the joyous hurly
Of the bird's matin song,
Because the light is early
And the day is long.

Now shines the votive treasure
 With silver-gleam and gold,
Whereby relations measure
The sympathetic pleasure
With which the friends behold
 The hymeneal function,
 From the lush jewel's unction
To the prim toast-rack cold—
The modest pepper-castor,
Or work of Modern Master
 Unsought for and unsold,
The statuette in plaster,
 And album manifold.

Come, for the hour approaches,
 And all await the bride.
Leaving their splendid coaches,
In silvery sheen, like roaches,
 The bridesmaids, side by side,
 Pace up the chancel wide,
Wearing their wedding brooches
 Of pearls and rubies pied.
Like sunlight driving shadows
Along the April meadows,
 Before them goes the bride.

Now clearly quire, ye singers,
A holy wedding psalm ;
Grasp bell-ropes, lusty ringers,
Tight in the timeful palm ;
Far let the music-swingers
Float on a sea of balm.
And, while they rock the steeple,
Crowds of the smartest people
Flock to the bridal bower,
Where wedding-cake and ices,
And presents, and their prices,
Speed the conducive hour,
Till valedictory rices
Upon Love's pilgrims shower.

Good luck betide bridegroom and bride
This rice and satin shoes day ;
Let them alone, they'll be "At Home
On every second Tuesday."

THE DISPASSIONATE SHEPHERD
TO HIS LOVE.

(Modern Style.)

I.

IT is not that I do not love you, sweet,
That I have been so niggard of love's gold ;
The world, and thought's world, nothing like you
hold,
Wrapp'd in love's royal robe from head to feet.

If many times a day we chance to meet,
The flame of joy grows not with custom cold,
As Summer's thronging splendours still unfold
A light more perfect, a diviner heat.

Yea, and I hope, with reverent delight,
That if I dared to ask so sweet a prize,
You would be brave through blushes, and your eyes,
With a serene delight grown brilliant,
Would, like an angel's in the vision'd night,
Look their clear love, unhidden by restraint.

II.

Yes ; but the prize obtained, the atmosphere
Of mystic richness round the shrined saint
Would take perforce the suburb's smoky taint,
And love less precious prove, though not less dear.

Your sweet sonatas, that I thrill to hear,
Would mock the memory then with tinklings faint
In some trim villa parlour, fresh as paint,
Where all things look too new, and all too near.

So Summer wanes, and leafless are the boughs,
And all the sunny bloom and colour dies,
And my queer tempers try you, and your eyes
Speak of poor household cares, 'neath furrow'd brows.
No ! let us spare the immolating vows,
And keep love sacred from realities.

A SYMPOSIUM.

SIRS, let us sit in a ring, and praise ourselves,
Shut out the silence of a heedless age,
And, with the music of the mutual page,
Charm fortune and renown, reluctant elves.

Albeit our works adorn no alien shelves,
Such chill cannot repress the noble rage
That drives the poet from the public stage
To rare academies of tens and twelves.

I care not for your songs, nor ye for mine ;
But honied patience stills the waiting pain,
Till each may tread the path the others trod.

When my turn comes, I will not stint one line ;
Still will I read, though you have ears in vain,
To my high lullaby constrained to nod.

FAREWELL TO THE FOREST.

(By a Modern Reviewer.)

FAREWELL ! The wind is singing o'er the downs,
Just as it 'sang the year that William landed,
And the great, simple landscape smiles and frowns,
Smiles when it flatters, frowns when it is candid ;
With moisten'd finger History turns its page,
Nature alone remains behind the age.

Larks sing the same old songs, lambs the same capers
Cut on the turf unchanged since Adam's fall ;
The world-old sun is veil'd with the same vapours ;
Storms that to-day the vicar's wife appal
Sounded the same to prehistoric man,
Who to the nearest cave for shelter ran.

Still the stars kindle their too constant tapers,
The leaves of spring in autumn duly fall ;
Nature is still the same, while all the papers
Find some new thing each day for boys to call ;
Oh, that the seasons, and the stars supernal
Would take a hint from any evening journal !

There is a white-throat's nest amid the thicket,
As any year might be, since white-throats were ;
Could I but reach, I'd tear it out and kick it—

It almost makes a light of Progress swear
To think how, since the white-throat was evolved,
It builds, and sings, and leaves itself unsolved.

Out on the dusty road the sun shines hotly—

Here in the dappled shade how fair and cool !
And yet the sun-fleck'd stream is clad in motley,
And the thick-headed bulrush, like a fool,
Nods wildly to the unresponsive fluid,
Just as it would if I had been a Druid :

Here the tall grasses wave their gracious heads,

Too fair for such a man-abandon'd lot,
For on the meanest of them Science sheds

Her blessing, in a pet-name polyglot ;
And here they wave, undried, ungumm'd, unclassified,
Till Science rages and will not be pacified.

Why, little wantons, will ye not develop

Your monads into trumpet tongues of truth ?
Nor make discredited emotions well up,

Worthy of those who in the race's youth
Spent their spare time, 'mid stratagems and treasons,
Weaving elaborate myths about the seasons.

Poor foundlings, crooning your untaught *Te Deum*,

I love you e'en in your neglected state,

I yearn to store you in a vast museum,

Banning your slattern mother from the gate.

While children, if by that time we have got any,

Revel within on 'ologies and botany.

Farewell ! I go to life, and life's sensations ;

Police-courts, politics, tight-hats, and boots ;

The glorious racket of the railway stations,

And all that raises man above the brutes ;

But, leaving you, my molecules wax warm

T'wards yours, although in vegetable form.

See, where the useless streamlet idly chimes,

Mid the forget-me-nots' sun-latticed blue

I gently lay this morning's *Penny Times*,

And this month's Half-a-crown Advanced Review.

So may soft dews distil the printer's ink,

Inform your plasm and lead you on to think.

GOOD-BYE, SUMMER !

SUMMER'S nearly over,
Corn has followed clover,
Nuts and apples reign ;
Snapt their slender mooring,
Leaves would go a-touring—
Freedom brief and vain ;
They are fain to follow
The sun-seeking swallow.
Yet the glass is rising
To a height surprising,
And, to sweet surmising,
June is here again.
Cuckoo, cuckoo, slowly
Knelling from the foliage,
Runs in fancy's head ;
Suns again for fun set,
And dawn follows sunset
Ere we go to bed,
And daisies in mazes,
Where the haze is lifted, spread.

Yet this sweet September,
Like a county Member,
Showers its gifts around ;

Trees with gold are tipped,
And the most insipid
 Tracts of fallow ground
With a sober splendour,
Gossamer'd and tender,
 By its grace are crown'd.
Fuller flows the river,
Like a wayward giver
 Who has stinted long ;
Broad, and deep, and stately,
It assists us greatly,
Though for up-stream towers,
Or more hardy rowers,
 Just a trifle strong.

Ours no luncheon hasty—
Here's a goodly pasty,
And for liquor tasty
 Ale of temper'd power ;
Cool it in the water
For about a quarter
 Of a sunny hour.
Fish are flashing silvery ;
Who would care to kill very
 Many roach or perch ?
They are blithe and merry—

Come, a glass of sherry,
For the corkscrew search ;
While the great swans gobble,
What we throw with wobble
And with lazy lurch.

There is Mabel standing
At the rustic landing,
With an air commanding,
Which her curls would check ;
Like a boy heroic
On a burning deck.
Kisses anemoic
Play about her neck ;
She could make a stoic
Gambol at her beck,
Like a brown and pleasant
Chirpy kind of bird,
Ornamental peasant,
Queen of creams and curd ;
When another's present,
How I loathe the third.

Now, all slights forgiven,
By the sunlight shriven,
Laugh the happy fields.

Past the rain and raw gust
Of deceitful August,
 Earth her late love yields ;
And the oars flash, dripping,
As the boat goes slipping
 Through the liquid bars ;
While serenely gracious,
Heaven's hollow spacious
 Fills with quiet stars.
Soon will storms come hurling
 Down the sullen reach,
And the waters curling,
 Sudden lessons teach
In the art of "feather "
During stormy weather ;
Yet one more fine jewel
 In our life is set,
Ere the Winter cruel
Brings its grog and gruel,
 Fogs and winds and wet.

While our bliss we're vaunting,
Something still is wanting,
 Something—never mind,
What the gods have given
Never can be riven—
 Heaven still is kind.

TOMMY ON MUSEUMS.

AS a mausoleum
To a palace of chasten'd fun,
Is the British Museum
To charming South Kensington.
You go to the former
With people you rather bar,
Who wax no warmer,
However agreeable you are ;
Whose venom'd wonder,
If you lightly open your lips,
Like fossil thunder,
Shivers your fine-spun quips.
And even more so
If you honestly venture to say
That a batter'd torso
Would look much better away.

When you have gulp'd your
Comfortless coffee or soup,
You scan the sculpture,
Single, or posed in a group ;

And dust of mummy
Has got such a hold on your brain,
That you think your tummy
Will never be cheerful again,
And you wonder however
The lauded sculptors of old,
Undoubtedly clever
Such soulless studies could mould.
But, thank goodness,
The insects no longer recline
In their camphor'd woodness
And creepy spirits of wine.
For fusty antiquities
Are joyous as April's gales
To the crawling Iniquities,
Horrid with nippers and scales.

But at Kensington straightway
A delicate charm is spread,
From the entrance gateway
Till you dream of it all in bed.
The people you go with
Are so conducive and fair,
That you'd like to show with
Them always, and everywhere.

With their happy chatter,
 Their fancies pretty and keen,
And laughs that flatter
 The happy silence between ;
Their sun-bright faces,
 And girlhood's dignity sweet,
Like Grecian Graces
 Out for a godlike treat.
The dainty grill-room
 With culture and comfort shines,
And you find you've still room
 For further viands and wines,
And your waist grows tighter
 In a bountiful moonled way,
And eyes are brighter,
 And brighter the things we say.

O musty mummies,
 O classical dignity cold,
O soulless dummies
 Of Orient empires old !
Here gem and statue,
 Panel and carven shrine,
Are looking at you
 With sympathy all divine.

No cardboard, nor camphor,
 No moth-fretted ghost of beasts,
And the long-dry amphor
 Is gay with remember'd feasts.
And I give my graces
 Their pick of jewel and gem,
Of priceless laces
 And picture and diadem ;
And their sunny faces
 Are dearer than all of them.

A BALLAD OF THE THREE YEARS' SYSTEM.

(*By Hans Sachspensbanger.*)

LOOK at the braw pianny
Stannin' agains' the wa' :
See till the wee bit manny
There where our shadows fa' ;
The wood is as bright as a tallat-glass,
The keys are ebon and ivorie,
The sconces shine like the beaten gowd ;
Was never so braw a pianny.

Fifteen shullin' a month I paid,
Three times over the months cam' round ;
Suns of Summer have warmed ma hoosie,
Snaws of Winter have hid the ground ;
Leaves in the Autumn-fog hang dripping,
Eaves wi' the chatter o' birds resound.
But, whether the day break late or airy,
Ilka month as the day cam' round,
The mairchant ca'd for his fifteen shullin',
Fifteen shullin'—nearly a pound !

And ilka month a sair doot vexed me,
An' rived ma heart wi' a dolefu' pain :
Would I play the worth of my fifteen shullin',
Or spare what some day would be my ain?
Weel, I compromised wi' ma braw pianny
And played it aiblins once in a moon,
An' oh, but the music was callèd hearin'—
Fifteen shullin' a tune !

Now I lock it close, and polish it daily,
An' I'll hand it down to posteritie,
An' I'll tie it up wi' a strict injunction
That nobody ever shall touch a key.
For I pinchit sair, and I savit dourly
To pay the siller as months cam' round,
An' now I hae earnit the whole pianny
Never again will I waste a sound.

A SEASONABLE DITTY.

(By Stepniakney.)

A MONTH ago I had a cold,
And when my family I told,
They all exclaimed, "Oh, rubbish!"
And all the solace that I got
Consisted in a treatment hot,
Hot-groggy and hot-tubbish.

My symptoms met with jeer and scoff;
They heard unmoved my plaintive cough,
And told me, void of pity,
Instead of staying warm at home,
'Twould do me far more good to roam
As usual to the City.

The self-same symptoms—only slight—
Are radiant with the lurid light
Of the new epidemic,
And now that Turnham Green is "down,"
They swathe me in my dressing-gown,
And proffer potions chemick.

Obedient to affection's call,
To depths of huskiness I fall,
 In tremulous cadenza ;
What though a native cold they jeer,
They treat with mix'd respect and fear,
 A Russian Influenza.

A while ago, without remorse,
A slighter cold would mean divorce
 A toro nec non mensâ ;
But the whole household now hangs round,
Conciliated by the sound
 Of Russian Influenza.

'T would hurt their feelings, should I say
A word of going out to-day ;
 So, free from business trammels,
To peaceful eve from cosy morn
I will the study-walls adorn
 With Aspinall's enamels.

Though sweet these restful moments are,
In years to come the light catarrh
 Will sigh "*Che faro senza*
Those tender cares that lent a charm
To all the sudden wild alarm
 Of Russian Influenza ?"

ODE.

(On the Pleasure arising from Ginger-cake.)

SKYLARK, that dost the morning wake
Up in the pearly heights of dawn,
Or when its dædal splendours break
In streaks of empyrean brawn,
Be not so proud, thou canst not make,
As Chloe can, a ginger-cake.

O thou fleet-footed fawn,
That through the glade dost lightly take
Thy dappled way, and scarcely shake
The dewdrops from the lawn,
Be not so proud ; thou canst not make,
As Chloe can, a ginger-cake.

O beefen herds of browsing steak,
That sweeten all the air around,
Rich milk you give and many a pound
Of butter, fresh as primroses ;
You cannot make a ginger-cake
As Chloe can, with perfect ease.

O chanticleer, who flapp'st thy wings
Before the watchful lark upsprings,
And sound'st thy clarion ere the flakes
Of the on-rushing daylight's foam
Whiten the fields where the stars roam,
Thou ken'st of many mystic things,
But not a whit of ginger-cakes,
Which golden-headed Chloe makes.

O nightingale, that trill'st thy pearly note
While yet the Easter breezes coldly blow,
Gargling with tender song thy strained throat,
Melting the moonless night with raptured woe,
And charming all the budded bower,
Though all around thee is in flower,
Yet cooking is, proud bird, beyond the warbler's
power ;
And Chloe makes delicious cakes,
Albeit, as yet, she hath not charmed a bower.

Not, Cake, from greedy love of thee,
The bard is fain thy praise to sing,
But that all Nature's minstrelsy,
All woodland craft of foot and wing,
All magic of the budding spring,

All that most moves that inner love,
Which thrills to tokens from above,
Unite in this their praise to bring
To amber-headed Chloe's feet—
Like her, they pretty are or sweet.
Like her, they make a world of joy
When winter stings, or wasps annoy,
In this on common ground they meet—
Yet, not transcending Nature's plan,
They cannot make a ginger-cake,
And Chloe can.

A BALLAD OF EVIL SPEED.

(A Cool Collation of Several Bards.)

I WOULD I had not met you, sweet,
I wish you had been far away
From where, in Upper Wimpole Street,
We two foregather'd yesterday.
Somewhere in that unlovely street
Summer's lost beauty, hid away,
Woke at the music of your feet,
And sought the little girl in grey.
Around your head the sunbeams play—
Home to the depths of your deep eyes
Soft shadows of the woodland stray,
Then sparkle with a quick surprise,
As when the branch-entangled skies
Shake from the depths of woodland stream
Awhile in laughing circles gleam,
Then spread to heaven's peace again
Amber and gold, and feathery grey,
You suited well the Autumn day,
The muffled sun, the misty air,
The weather like a sleepy pear

And yet I wish that you had been
Afar, beside the sounding main,
Or swaying daintily the rein
Of mettled courser on the green,
So I had passed, and passed unseen.

For I arose, from dreams of thee,
So late that morn, my matin tea
Was cold as mutton two days cooked ;
As in the looking-glass I looked,
Methought the razor need not wreak
Its wonted vengeance on my cheek,
Nor clear the shadow from my chin
Till to the City I had been.
Thus, horrid with a nascent beard,
By chance through Wimpole Street I steered,
Trusting therein to shun contempt
Of who abhor a man unkempt.
For like a mother-bird, who's caught
The cant of modern woman's thought,
My restless tie refused to sit,
And restless fingers vainly sought
To soothe the silkworm's stubborn toil.
But only did its candour soil,
And suffered none the less from it.

For all my neck, and head no less,
Owned to a vague unquietness,
As when the vagrant spiderlet
Has spread at large her filmy net
To catch the moonbeams, wavering white,
At the front gate on Autumn night.

Then suddenly the sombre way
Rock'd like the darkness struck by day,
The endless houses reel'd from sight,
And all romance and all delight
Came thronging in a glorious cloud.
So, when the drums are beating loud,
The mob comes sweeping down the Mall,
Far heralding the bear-skins tall.
Glorious in golden clothing comes
The great drum-major with his drums
And sun-smit brass of trumpets ; then
The scarlet wall of marching men,
Midmost of which great Mayors sets
The colours girt with bayonets.
Yes, there were you—and there was I,
Unshorn, and with erratic tie,
And for that once I yearn'd to shun
My social system's central sun.

How could a sloven slave express
The frank, the manly tenderness
That wraps you round from common thought,
And does not ask that you should know
The love that consecrates you so?
No ; furtive, awkward, restless, cold,
I basely seemed to set at naught
That sudden bliss, undreamt, unsought.
What must she think, my girl of gold ?
I dare not ask ; and baffled wit
Droops—till sweet hopes begin to flit—
Like butterflies that brave the cold—
Perhaps she didn't notice it.

AT A CERTAIN MUSIC.

PEACE, peace at last, if it can really be !

Yea, all unchecked, the swelling soul explores
Each cranny of the silence timidly,
As summer tides well up rock-pillared shores.
Green mead of peace ! The huddled sense expands

In soundless bliss of restful vacancy ;
Bruised buds of Fancy spread their feeble hands,
While Quiet tends them in a soft embrace,
And kisses motherly each drooping face,
And bids the pallid blades of Thought rejoice ;

For Emily her music doth forego,
Whose bass was most promiscuous, and her voice,
Throughout, some fifth part of a tone too low.

PRÆNUNTIA VERIS.

A TOKEN from the coming Spring
Has greeted me to-day,
Which tears into my eyes can bring,
And stop me on my way.

'Tis not that in the pathway lies
A primrose heedless tost ;
'Tis not the martyr bud which dies
Before the lingering frost.

Nor yet the subtle whisper, heard
Clear 'mid the blustering wind,
That tells of flower, and bee, and bird,
And April days behind.

No ! 'twas that while with eager pace
Heedless I hurried by,
A gnat, the firstling of the race,
Flew straight into my eye !

NEAR MENTONE.

(By an Englishman in Italy.)

THE sheen of olive-leafage flickers o'er
The shaded valley depths, like guardian steel
To keep from sunshine's ravage the rich store
Of flowers that those cool treasures conceal.
In restful masses stand the pines on high,
In the deep hush of the unclouded sky.

The wind from seaward blows : no fitful gust,
But one harmonious march of fragrant air,
Brisk with the sharpness of the salt sea-dust,
Sweet with Spring flowers, and piny odours rare :
That breathes, as with a loving hush, to still
The voice of maidens coming down the hill.

With laughing eyes beneath the kerchief's fold,
And smiling lips and queenly pose and gait,
They bear their lemon-baskets, filled with gold,
Like Grecian nymphs who on some goddess wait ;
A living picture in each vivid face,
And balanced form of free and simple grace.

A hush of converse as they draw anigh,
A coyness in the lift of nimble feet,
A consciousness of my regard, a shy
Half smile of welcome as our glances meet,
Like wind-swept sunshine over April grass,—
And, Heavens ! the whiff of Garlic as they pass

A DAY OUT.

(*By Jacques Junior.*)

A FISHING, paddling pic-nic ! What, to stand
On the lush margent of the gusty stream,
With feet benumbed, and watch the bobbing quill,
And then to dine *al fresco*—not for Jacques !
Where, for the smooth mahogany of Ind,
The unplanned earth is board ; for cushion'd chair
The damp earth, ant-infested, or rough root
Chafing the unaccustomed cuticle ;
Where mint-sauce th' insecure platter doth o'errun,
With hose and doublet playing Lucifer ;
Where glasses must be emptied as they're filled,
To the great prejudice of temperance,
Or, if set down, drops me a spider in,
To spoil the fortune he cannot enjoy,
Like Sir No-Company, who makes a third.
While e'en a grumble, relishabler far
Than that keen sauce of Sparta, is denied.
For one there'll be who'll not let ill alone,
But, "I prithee try this compound ; I learnt the knack
In Venice," or, "Thus in England wines are mix'd !
Pray you pronounce upon't." Another, worst,

Will keep all waiting while he spoils good food,
Concocting some vile preparation,
Calling't a Sallet. "Taste in charity,
For Fate's against me; some ingredient
Of utmost import hath' been left at home."
And so the wholesome green is all besprent
With bile-disturbing mixture. Out upon't!
I'd rather find a kitten in a stew
'Than one of these same preaching salad-bunglers.
What are the uses of *al fresco* meals?
Who likes a toad, ugly and venomous,—
Where's such a precious fool—upon the bread?
And they who, in contempt, the Dryad's haunts
Profane with empty bottles and loose papers,
Find tongues in tarts, ants running on their boots,
Wasps in the wine, and salt in everything!

ON THE TOWING-PATH

(*A Cantabrigian Canto.*)

THE wind is brisk on the flowing tide ;
Like hammer'd silver the water wide
Is blown to knops and ridges ;
The battling sunbeams come and go,
And the tugs puff up with their flocks in tow,
And lumbering lighters, heavy and slow,
Drift, broadside on, through the bridges.

The willows have taken a sunny stain,
And the underglow of the Spring again
In amber and brown is peeping ;
The clouds, sun broken, are moving free,
And the rooks caw loud from the leafless tree,
That shows in its waving tracery
Where the wonder of leaves is sleeping.

And here they saunter, or stand at gaze,
Waterside characters, old M.A.'s,
And "Men" of the current fashion ;

Clerical types of a first boat crew,
Nursemaids natty, bedecked with blue,
Schoolboy truants, and damsels true
To a vague University passion.

But thought flies back to the "rounding grey,"
To the fenland flat, and the Autumn day,
And the path, where the patient gazer
Sees jogging along at a good round trot
With vehement shouts to you can't see what,
And a band of runners all piping hot,
The Coach in a light-blue blazer.

And then the sullen and sluggish stream
Is woke by the stroke and lit by the gleam
Of broad blades strenuous lashing,
And pæans of hope in our hearts we sing,
Though we soon tail off in a panting string,
And the boat sweeps on with a lifting swing
And a certain amount of splashing.

And away goes pounding the old grey horse
Whose task was more a matter of "course"
Than any Gee's that has hair on ;

And back as the tinkling bells recall
To much-cut Chapel, or cheery Hall,
Across the river, while shadows fall,
By the ferry that's kept by Charon.

Year after year unchanging change
Still finds new talent of equal range
In reading or cutting capers :
Still Dons are developed from Undergrads,
And Lights of Reason from roaring lads,
And the cranky ones are running their fads
In Parliament or the papers.

But the boat is coming ; and, dark or light,
A 'Varsity Eight is a gallant sight
No matter how grave we're growing ;
And dear to the man with an open mind
In the sporting columns next day to find
Such opposite praise and blame combined,
Such various views of rowing.

They write it up, and they write it down,
And it may or may not excite the town
Like a war or a Cabinet crisis ;

But whether the people go or stay,
No heart is callous on Boat-race day,
That ever has seasoned work with play
Beside the Cam or the Isis.

A SONNET OF VALENTINES.

WHEN February's lingering light reveals
The patient earth, still pallid with the weight
Of Winter's darkness, and the dazzling freight
Of snow, which Summer's wealth in trust upscals,

And heavenward turns th' unwary walker's heels,
And lends to dauntless Infancy a straight
And aggravating missile for the pate
Of musing stranger, who astonished feels

The concrete cloud upon his collar burst ;—
Now, when the birds make their engagements known,
And early baas are on the thin winds blown,

There are who send—I can't tell why, I'm sure—
To strangers, who have ne'er with them convers'd,
Rude painted daubs of vilest portraiture.

A SOOTHING SONG FOR AUGUST.

FAR from placid pleasure
Fashion's nomads roam ;
Wisdom finds the treasure
In its fullest measure
Peacefully at home.

Free from by-the-way bores
Of hotel and train,
Rest we from our labours,
With our fair young neighbours
Round us once again.

Bees in drowsy fettle
Lazy lilies rob ;
Slumbrously they settle,
Thrumming like a kettle
On the Summer's hob.

Flies their mystic mazes
Intricately thread,
Where the sunshine blazes
Through the cedarn hazes,
Just above my head.

Pussy, with her fur feet
 Curled beneath her breast,
Drowzes where the turf-heat
Soothes her with a surfeit
 Of delicious rest.

Now a laughing quarrel
 Stirs the stilly air,
Where, beyond the laurel,
With their white apparel
 Glistening in the glare,

Boys and girls together
 Make a gallant crew,
Boys in highest feather,
Girls like Summer weather,
 Bright and sweet and true.

WILLIAMS REDIVIVUS.

DEAR MR. PUNCH,

Your interest in all that is good in literature is as strong as your encouragement to latent talent is judicious. This consideration must be my excuse for troubling you about my literary efforts. I have determined to reform the modern Stage by reviving the Shakspearian Drama. This is not to be effected by writing five-act tragedies on historical subjects, whose interest, for cultured people, has evaporated about the time that they have finished their education ; and for the masses is non-existent. It is to be done only by applying the Shakspearian method to subjects of present interest. Our ordinary nineteenth-century affairs—newspaper reports, or what not—treated with the genius of Shakspeare, would produce distinctly Shakspearian results. This, then, Sir, is what I have determined to accomplish. My first attempt is a tragedy, called *The Lodger*. I send herewith an extract from the great scene in the Fourth Act, where the Poet, who has found his lodgings incompatible with his culture, is haled before the Doge. Will you give me your candid opinion, and suggest the best plan for getting the play acted ?

RODERICK TWEDDLE.

The Poet is here giving an account of his incompatible lodgings :—

POET.

Beneath a shade of glass was posed a Thing,
A dreadful Thing of feathers ; the stuff'd soul
Of a lost Parrot ; grey, with varnish'd beak,
A varnish'd horror, on a grey despair.
One eye, rebellious to the dry, shrunk frame,
Follow'd with glassy dread intelligence
All movements and all looks. The other eye
Took yet more awful heed of the still room,
Where in the mirror every action liv'd
Without the life of sound. The mirror's edge
Was swathed in yellow gauze—amorphous folds—
That might have eddied on the leathern limbs
Of nautching mummies. Two glass candlesticks,
With tinkling ringlets, flanked the mouldering bird ;
And shells, that breathed not of the sea, but kept
Some smack of fish defunct, the shelf adorn'd.
Two cups, whose claim to beauty was the crack
That made them poor for use ; two vases blotched
By the coarse hand of vile machinery--
For each a woollen mat, a parasite
That stuck and clung, and on the easy chairs
Unstable housings ; on the table round

Long folds of staring cloth, that caught the knees,
And hung about, and slid whene'er you moved—
And mats where there was never need of mats,
And maple-framed engravings of the Queen,
Of the Last Judgment, and the Plains of Heaven,
The Exhibition of Eighteen-Fifty-One,
Clifton Suspension Bridge, the Death of Wesley,
And of a blunt-nosed Woodman's flat return.
The Baresark mood came on me. Right and left
I hack'd and cleft. Th' affrighted landlady,
Coming, suburban trim, all householder,
I slew upon her splinter'd furniture,
Then fired the pile, and fled with lightened heart !

POLONIUS.

Although it be a little out of fashion,
There is much taste and valour in this Welshman.

DOGE.

Take him away and hang him !

POET.

Oh, I say !

A SUMMER SOLILOQUY.

(*By Jacques Junior.*)

A BEE, or not a bee? That is the question.
Whether 'twere better not to mind, and suffer
The stings that every Summer are our portion,
Or take the trouble but to move an arm,
And, by opposing, end them. It flies—it creeps,
It creeps, perchance it stings! Then comes the rub,
When we have shuffled off our clothing. Soft,
'Twas but a bluebottle! How sweet it is
To lie like this i' the sun, and think of nought
Save how sweet 'tis to lie, and think of nought;
And that meseems to many wordy sages
Were small refreshment in this windy time.
How many are there who do cheat themselves,
And with themselves the many, that they are
The very vaward leaders of the fray,
The victors of the pomp of intellect.
Whereas they are the merest driven spray,
The running rabble heralding the march
Impelled by what they herald;—
Who ever glance behind to see which way——
Oh, my prophetick soul! my Aunt Eliza!

[*He is stung!*]

AT TWILIGHT.

THE plane's broad plates of weather-beaten gold
Lie shrunk and sodden in the miry way,
No more about the dappled trunk to play
With tricky beams and battling breezes bold.

Night swathes the sober light in thickening fold,
Like a grey moth webbed in a prison grey,
And the pale willow to the dying day
Gleams like despair, unsolaced and untold.

Now from the darkling tower the bells begin
Their sad-soul'd chiming, as a lonely child
Cries on for dreariness, but in his cries

Puts no real heart of sorrow, yet beguil'd
By vague self-pity, wails that he may win
The wan-faced mother soon to dry his eyes.

BROKEN OFF.

I WOULD forget you—a while at least,
Till you somewhat blend with the bygone days,
Till the cruel longing has somewhat ceas'd,
And the blinding light is a soften'd haze.

And I do forget you ; for days are dull,
And Summer's pageant has lost its spell ;
The roses are scarcely beautiful,
And the cuckoo's call is a passing bell.

And all day long in a tiring whirl,
With a brain that's dazed and a heart like lead,
I fight with the thought of the little girl
Whose troth has faltered, whose faith is dead.

But now, when my heart had ceased to yearn,
And my blood to surge at the thought of you,
In my helpless sleep you must needs return,
And all the struggle begins anew.

I gave you a kiss, my love, last night ;—
No dash of splendour on storms of tears,
No wild defiance to time's calm might,
No bliss that avenges the waste of years.

But you bade me to set your bonnet straight,
And duly order your wayward curls,
And I laugh'd at your patience, as you wait,
And kiss'd you the sweetest of little girls.

So I had my joy for a moment's space,
And I wake, to find the peace I had won
Has vanish'd away with the vision'd face,
As through the desert I wander on.

A FANCY.

JUNE it should be in its early splendour,
June ere the cuckoo has changed his song,
When clouds of blossom and leafage tender,
Are sweet and fair as the days are long.

June when the Summer's troth is given,
When earth looks up like a laughing face
Into the loving eye of heaven,
That fills to fulness her cup of grace.

Over the drifts of the daisied meadow,
Over the edge of the woodland deep,
Where dusky sunlight and shining shadow
Waver and flicker as soft winds creep.

Where the great tree superbly launches
Its tremulous crest in the giddy air,
Spreading aloft a maze of branches,
Black as the threads of the maidenhair.

Where, in the silent forest-reaches,
A song unutter'd for ever broods,
Under the aisles of the pillar'd beeches
In green and luminous solitudes.

Then with a step as light as laughter,
Scarcely bending the bluebells down,
With rifts that waver the light winds after,
Scattering light on hair and gown.

All in white, with a rose for favour,
Hands outspread in a triumph quaint,
The grace that bountiful heaven gave her
Bright as the halo of pictur'd saint.

She should stand, where the sunlight glances,
Her head aside like a peeping bird,
While all around her the leafage dances
In tremulous flakes of glory stirr'd !

So should it be ; but the wind is sighing,
The leaves lie sodden in pools of rain,
And hopes that were strong will be dead or dying,
When nightingales sing in the dusk again.

“IRA FUROR BREVIS.”

A STORMY sunset-smile upon the ocean,
Blue lakes of sky amid cloud-mountains tall ;
Broad sands, red cliffs, the breaker's tumbling motion ;
And that lone figure giving life to all.

Clear paleness, with an underglow of blushes ;
Love-powerful eyes, unconscious of their power ;
Hair shyly playing as the strong wind rushes,
Driving the last drops of the passing shower.

To some it may be thou art still a token,
A sacrament of girlhood's loveliness ;
To me thou art another idol broken,
One more experience, one fancy less.

Though in thine eyes still plays the light I blessèd,
Though on thy lips the smile I thought divine,
This do I swear, the hand another pressèd
Can never, never more, be pressed by mine !

Perhaps you felt not that his clasp was pressing,
Perhaps large hands must needs close fast on small,
Perhaps your touch was not the least caressing,
Perhaps a thousand things—I've thought of all.

All these I know not ; this I'm sure of only,
Maiden who wanderest by the Summer sea,
Though thou art fair and kind, the seashore lonely,
It shall not be the less so, sweet, for me.

A SONG AFTER SUNRISE.

“ **I**T has risen, at last it has risen, and Tyranny reels
like the night ;

Lo, here is an ending of darkness, for Liberty's self gives
the light.

Hail, downfall of Wrong and of Ruler : hail triumph of
Manhood and Right ! ”

“ Then raise the Republican banner, then cry the Repub-
lican cry,

Till the Gospel of Brotherly Freedom is echoed like rain
from the sky ”

The Gospel that all men are equal, save those who the
Gospel deny.

“ When Government rests with the people, the banners
of strife will be furled,

And rapine, and crime, and oppression, to Tophet, their
birthplace, be hurled.

—But tell us first who are the People, and what is the
rest of the world ?

O prophet of power of the People, take one as he sits at
his beer—

How Liberty's ardour potential illumines the low cunning
leer.

Doff hat and bow knee, sage and poet, a possible martyr
is here !

The tocsin will ring Revolution, the people throng out in
the street ;

The flames will go throbbing to heaven, like hearts that
delirious beat,

Till the lead of the soldiery stills them ; and lo, he is
here at your feet !

Divine inspiration of Freedom ! for here is the drink-
sodden slave,

Who fell for the love of his fellows, Humanity's charter
to save.

His children and wife never felt it—he kept it to garnish
his grave.

Take ignorance, bigotry, passion, lust, cruelty, hate, and
despair,

Jack Cades and Doll Tearsheets in thousands, and lo,
Revolution is there,

And the multiplied unit of foulness becomes in totality
fair !

Equality, Brotherhood, Freedom, your tinsel no black
ruin screens,
While manhood is outraged—in Nobles, and womanhood
trampled—in Queens ;
—Spell a word with a capital letter, and the deuce only
knows what it means.

A MIDDLE-AGED VALENTINE.

I DO not love thee, dear, because
Thine eyes celestially blue
Can play and sparkle without pause,
Or gaze the soul of heaven through.

Nor yet because thy hair in waves
Veils with its sullen gold a brow
Whose perfect hue no favour craves
From violets peeping through the snow.

Thou dost not love me ; that is why
I am so deep in love with thee ;
The open gladness of thine eye
Is dearer far than love to me.

I have no fear of changing faith,
Of youthful visions scatter'd far ;
Nor that dread mockery, the wraith
Of what we were in what we are.

When those free waves of golden hair
Are subject to a stricter rule,
When maidenhood's demurest air
Has put thy frolic youth to school,

What will you think of that staid friend
Who shares your fair and stormy days,
The smiles that warm, the tears that bend,
And all your April whims and ways?

But ah ! I see a coming day
When tearful, happy, shy, and proud,
You have a whispered word to say,
Too beautiful to breathe aloud.

If then you wish to make amends
To one who now would be a boy,
Let me be first of all your friends
To wish my little sweetheart joy !

ON A YACHT.

WITH ripple of water and laughter,
Fair faces and atmosphere bright,
We spread our broad sails to the breezes,
And skirt the green shores of the Wight.

What passionate dream of the poets
Could equal the beauty of this,
To sail on for ever and ever,
With sunlight and Lucy and bliss?

No toil in the hurry of pleasure,
No midnight more busy than day ;
And care-soothing waters untiring,
To rock us in rhythmical sway !

The Needles are past, and before us
Is nothing but ocean and sky,
Long billows come racing beside us,—
They're getting unpleasantly high.

Oh, deeper and deeper o'erwhelms me
A silent and solemn despair ;
If the "Sea-Gull" went straight to the bottom,
I really don't think I should care.

And still I wax greener and greener,
The hue of this horrible sea ;
And the infinite ocean is only
An infinite basin for me.

A SUMMER NIGHT.

A WARM wind moved the tree-tops, looming tall
Against the lesser blackness of the sky,
And swept the fragrance from the grasses dry,
And whispered for the waiting clouds to fall.

But ere the drops came pattering to the call,
A gulf of sudden pearl was cleft on high,
And the moon poured from heaven's immensity
A passion of light over the cloudy pall.

Deep in the balmy labyrinths of leaves
The shadows shrink : into each lurking place,
Fast as they hide, the fearless moonbeams pry ;
Over the wind-reap'd fields of heaven apace
The mottled clouds are gathered into sheaves,
Where stars, like poppies in the harvest, lie.

MY VALENTINE.

THE presage of a sweet surprise,
Love, veiled but hardly hidden,
Shone coyly in her laughing eyes,
Then droopt, by pride forbidden.

What could it mean? Oh, happy day !
St. Valentine propitious
Has proved, what hope scarce dared to say,
Reality delicious.

Filled with the tender fear of love,
My soul delays its pleasure,
To hover, like the lark above
Her grass enwoven treasure.

Oh, simple little heart ! What dread
And hope and joy were fighting,
As o'er the letter bent her head
To frame this formal writing.

Each letter that her hand has traced
With craftiest disguising,
Shall on my throbbing heart be placed,
To calm the tumult rising.

'Tis hers alone, for who beside
Should send so fair a token?
How sweetly dawns love's Summer-tide,
The frost of silence broken !

The dainty thing ! These flow'rs and lace
An inner beauty smother,
And in the gauzy bowers I trace
Another and another.

Like some fair transformation scene,
New wonders keep unfolding,
A living fairyland whose sheen
Fades not in the beholding.

Thus having dallied on the brink,
To learn my bliss the better,
With thirsting soul I stoop to drink—
What's this? A lawyer's letter !

THE VIGIL.

(At 20.)

TWELVE of the clock in a sweet June night,
Still as though Quiet lay dying,
A soft cloud muffles the broad moonlight,
And blinds the small stars prying.

Yet just a ripple of nightingales
Wells from the orchard shady,
Singing on, till starlight pales,
A lullaby for my Lady.

Oh ! angel, guarding her golden head,
While balmy night wanes slowly,
Some tender dream of me be sped
To her heart so simple and holy !

Three of the clock ! With the dawning bloom
A faint sweet breeze comes sighing
Amid the roses that shade the room
Where my tender and true is lying.

And holy forms in the mystic dawn
Are watching my sleeping maiden,
So dread like a veil o'er my heart is drawn,
And the air is with blessing laden.

Oh ! when she wakes to the softened glow
Of morning sunlight streaming,
Her heart will tell her of one below
Watching while she lay dreaming.

(At 50.)

Twelve, I declare, and not home yet !
That's just like daughters and mothers
They take their pleasure and clean forget
The wishes and wants of others.

It's dull enough with never a sound ;
That's nothing to them, they're merry
With jingling music, and glare all round,
And clammy chicken and sherry.

There, chirp, chirp, chirp, it's scarcely fair,
When one does drop off for a minute,
To be brought back to a hard armchair
By a chattering thrush or linnet !

* * * * *

Three o'clock, eh? at last it's light,
At last I hear the carriage ;
I wish some men who sighed to night
Could try *this* joy of marriage !

I'll open the door, and slip to bed ;
'Twill give them a fright to find it,
My wife will take it into her head
There's a burglar hid behind it.

Hm ! then she'll call me to hunt him out ;
There's nothing like being hearty,
I'll tease a little ; " half dead, no doubt,
With hunger after a party.

Girls never eat,"—Oh ! here you are,
Tired, eh? I'll get you a cup for
Some coffee, my love. " Good gracious, pa,
Whatever did you sit up for ? "

TO FLOWERS IN A LONDON LANE.

FAIR flowers, so innocent amid the stream
Of foul humanity that seethes around,
Like angels in the market are ye found,
Or like some noisome-dungeoned martyr's dream.

Where were ye yesterday when sunset's gleam
Cast its wan pity on this sordid ground?
What echoes of the nightingales are drowned
To-night in ribald oath or drunken scream?

Though in my hand the petals fall away,
Oh, bruised and faded, ye are still divine!
Ye have a fairer bloom that mocks decay,
In that immortal wreath the poets twine;
Lured by your odours Shelley's footsteps stray,
In Marvell's garden ye for ever shine!

AFTER TENNIS.

THE wind blows Summer o'er the land,
The daisied edge of his warm wave
Spreads ever up the verdant strand
That only tides of sunlight lave,
And now the green laburnums show
The dawning of their golden glow.

In the long path of lilac trees
We walk together tired of play ;
The players' voices on the breeze
Break not the stillness of the day ;
And all the soft and hazy air
Is warm as though the sun were there.

And love behind a tender cloud
Of doubt its Summer beauty veils ;
And 'mid youth's pageant music loud
Love's whispered melody prevails ;
Though soft as this delicious breeze
That stirs the blossomed lilac trees.

The game is lost, ah ! loss most sweet
The lawn we carelessly forsake,
And talking lightly of defeat
Your netted bat I think to take,
But by some happy guidance led,
I take a little hand instead.

And with the hand that rests in mine,
A heart above all price is given ;
And Tennis is a game divine,
And Life is love, and Earth is heaven ;
And all the mists are cleared away,
Against a coming marriage day

LUCINDA.

(Upon her Wedding.)

LUCINDA's wedding cake, ah me !
What dainties should not in it be,
What sweetness and what piquancy,
What candied fruits and spicery !
What richness for the strength of love,
What roundness for eternity,
What whiteness for her purity !

Now while the pealing bells outshow'r
All music's undevelop'd pow'r ;
Now while the bright wine sparkles less
Than drinkers' eyes with happiness ;
While love and mirth and music's tide
Sets to the radiance of the bride ;
No deeper pain my bosom swells
Than sadness murmurs in the bells.

But ah ! I mind a garden old,
Where long ago a love was told,
In May mornings as we walked
Amid the thickening leaves, and talked,

And thought a new thing we had found
When love's first radiance shone around,
That bloom of love that children know
When lilacs and laburnums blow.

But constancy were treason now,
And honour breaks the childish vow :
And in the wine that pledges both
I melt the pearl of boyhood's troth.
Full loyally I sacrifice
My only pearl, my pearl of price ;
But greatly dread to be alone
When bells have ceased and guests are gone.

IN THE FOG.

THE South-wind smiled like a sleeper
On the Winter of yesterday ;
But a mist hangs close this morning,
And chills the sweet hope away.

Nay, it would, but the coming beauty
Peeped out with yesterday's sun,
And we feel the clasp of its promise,
Though its work seems all undone.

In the heart of the mist sings Robin
Thinking already of Spring,
Even his red breast is hidden,
Though you hear the flirt of a wing—

A chirp, and a flutter of branches,
And drops patter down to the ground,
And a song close at hand in a moment
Flings a halo of sunshine round.

Mist, like the veil of a wizard,
Hides trees and all from sight,
But Spring is at work beneath it,
And when it all melts in light

We see she has not been lazy,
For buds have stolen out,
And here is another daisy,
And lo, they are all about !

And we sigh to find no roses,
A sigh that is hardly sad—
The melting ice in the river
A week ago made us glad.

A MARCH SONG.

THE rain is over, the clouds are high,
And rent by the wind's strong hand,
That scatters the gleanings of the sky
In sunlight over the land.

I know how the kindling woodlands shake
Their delicate brown and red,
I hear how the rooks their music make
High wheeling overhead.

I know how the building thristle calls,
And the harrowed grass smells sweet,
Though my shadow now on the pavement falls
Of glittering Regent Street.

There is joy abroad in the air to-day,
There is joy in the marbled sky ;
But the flow'rs in the windows are not so gay
As the faces that pass me by.

There's a smile on the lips of the matron staid,
There's a laugh in the maiden's eye ;
The joy is so great I am half afraid
Of the maidens who pass me by.

By a mirror'd window my raptures cease,
For what does the glass disclose?
There's a smut as big as a threepenny-piece
On the side of my Roman nose.

SPORT OF THE STORM.

A GREAT wind from the south-west blows,
The purple clouds hang low,
With here a wisp of ashen-grey
And there a streak like snow ;
And myriad crests the sky-line break,
The air is salt with spray,
The boats are high upon the beach,
The wind is lord to-day.

The eager, endless breakers beat
Like thunder on the strand,
The armies of the Infinite
Immeasurably grand.
And facing this immensity,
Long pier and solid wall,
White cliffs and stately houses show
Immeasurably small.

Faint colours touch the tossing deep,
Wan tears by twilight wept ;
Drown'd rainbows which the mounting waves
From the low clouds have swept ;

With one keen flash of palest gold
Where from a peep of blue,
Down a black fiery-fringed chasm
A sunbeam struggles through.

The seaward walk is beautiful
With many a graceful form
Where earth's fair blossoms face, with glee,
The fury of the storm.
And groups of men and maidens laugh
To feel the dashing spray ;
But many a last wild gasp is choked
Beneath the waves to-day.

Oh, mind of man ! while Nature's powers
Their might resistless show,
One simple girl a stronger spell
Upon the heart can throw.
Here come the Fitz-Plantagenets,—
And, left one moment free,
My hat, with rush elliptical,
Swoops madly out to sea.

REFLECTIONS.

(At Brighton.)

WHILE waiting listlessly for lunch,
And watching some promiscuous figures—
A bishop, an itinerant Punch,
A four-in-hand, a troupe of niggers—
There mingles with the noisy street
A memory of bygone dances ;
Tho' hackneyed now, I thought it sweet,
When, to its strains, with flying feet,
I sought a maiden's eyes to meet,
'Mid all the changing ball-room's chances.
O, strength of youthful love ; nor schemes,
Nor threats, nor separation stopped it ;
Fair burned our flame as summer dreams
Six months. And, then—we somehow dropped it ;
And lo ! the music speaks again
With all its mastery of passion ;
A first love still, and all in vain
We think to catch a newer strain,—
As if the soul of joy and pain
Could change with ever-changing fashion.

Ah, me ! it made my heart beat loud
And fast for nearly half a minute ;
While, not an hour ago, I bowed
To Lady Linda in the crowd ;
And with clear conscience then had vowed
My heart had no soft fibre in it.

But as once more that waltz I hear—
Albeit from a barrel-organ—
A form in gauzy clouds is near,
Soft nothings charm a little ear,
And once again we own the fear
Of mother stern as any Gorgon !

But time has passed, and I have found
Life not at all as I designed it ;
Beneath the flowers is common ground ;
The dancing is but turning round ;
'Tis cat-gut makes the heavenly sound ;
And—heavens !—I don't seem to mind it !

MARCH SONG.

MARCH comes and the Winter is over,
The shivering lambkins at play
Are dreaming already of clover,
And meadows with buttercups gay.

The fields are all ruled by the harrow
In darkness and light, row on row,
And the grass in the gardener's barrow
Is sprinkled with daisies like snow.

Unlimited linen is drying
Too fully in view of the lawn,
The cats in the gloaming are crying,
And the cocks shout aloud for the dawn.

All Nature's young strength is reviving,
And showing in beauty and beast,
While Winter with Summer is striving,
For the wind has got fixed in the East.

Wealth spurts from the wheels of the hansom,
In heaps at street corners it lies,
And the citizen swears, with the ransom
Of monarchs bedimmed his eyes.

The heart of the poet rejoices,
And takes fleeting light for true ore,
As he listens entranced to the voices
That oft have deceived him before.

He dreams, like the lambkin, of clover,
He soars on the lark's soaring wing;
But still a dark cloud hovers over,
And shadows the sunlight of Spring.

Though nights may get shorter and shorter,
The sun gather strength on his way,
Ere we welcome the incoming quarter
Alas ! there's the old Quarter Day.

A LAST GASP.

(By a Moribund Æsthete.)

U LTIMATE Utter ! Truliest too! Too !
most subtile Quiteness ! witherly aghast
I dash my rags against the futile Past
blank of the Blossom, hopeless of the You !

Over these famish'd orbs of watery blue
again those unexpressive features creep ;
and sighs as soft as soap soothe sobs to sleep,
while Fancy blurs again the Shape she drew.

Prone-wallowing, cushionwards I coo my moans,
and roll reluctant into rocksome rest,
spreading a softer head on your soft breast ;
as evermore, to elemental bones

annihilate, of inmost You I dream,
abject in pallid Proneness of Supreme.

ORPHEUS AGONISTES.

WITH intonation fairly pure
From lungs that long have borne it,
Two storeys up an amateur
Is striving with the cornet.

Some solace to a lonely heart
Supply those strains erratic ;
And who shall scoff the cult of art
Though practised in an attic ?

But now the strident echoes cease
To pant the prayer from " Moses,"
And fancy, left awhile in peace,
Plays, sings, conducts, composes.

And first with roll of tympani
And trumpet notes sonorous,
The silence heaves exultantly
And bursts into a chorus.

Up, like a rocket to the sky,
Rush voices, swift and steady,
Then pause and break in harmony
And sink in many an eddy.

A tide of strings takes up the tale,
And wave on wave comes thronging,
And from the 'cellos mounts a wail
Of half-triumphant longing.

And like a ray of sunlight keen
Upon the murky billows,
Or, 'gainst the dark cloud masses seen,
The green of April willows,

A voice surmounts the storm of sound,
From crest to crest attaining,
A moment in the tumult drowned
The next new triumph gaining.

And as into the press of song
Fast pours the tuneful plunder,
Still treads the voice divinely strong
The wine of music under.

In cataracts the tenors race,
Like spray the treble rises,
In hollow caverns booms the bass :
Harmonious surprises

Flit from the altos all around,
Like rainbow hues prismatic—
But ah ! there comes too real a sound,
The cornet in the attic.

Confusedly the chorus reels,
The urgent fiddles shiver,
As dies the foam of paddle wheels
Upon the grimy river.

For, not unthinkingly to praise,
There seems to be a trial
Of strength between the "Marseillaise"
And Grandpaternal Dial.

There is a struggle and a pain,
In music's inmost essence,
And even in its rudest strain
We own their sacred presence.

And sympathy that meets in art
Forbids my love to languish,
Though *his* is all the struggling part,
And *mine* is all the anguish.

REMINISCENCES.

(By a Dyspeptic.)

THE lamp is dim, the fire is low,
I lack the energy to stir it,
Should fire and light together go,
In this dark mood, I should prefer it.

Life's waters ever darker flow ;
Once all the stream with joy was glancing ;
And now I do not care to know
Where my old friends are dining, dancing.

Some years ago I dined and danced—
My lines were cast in pleasant places—
Eyes, that I see no longer, glanced
Their brightest, then, from winsome faces.

And then I never toiled alone :
True friends each other's burdens carried ;
Ah, me ! the happy band is flown—
Rich, dead, or broke, abroad or married.

And those I meet have lost the charm
They cast in other days around them,
E'en those whose hearts are still as warm
Are not the same as then I found them.

Old Jack, the burly, *toujours gai*,
Gets each succeeding season glummer ;
And Maud I met the other day,
But not the Maud of that sweet Summer.

Raw lads, whose freshness we despise,
Boys scarcely out of Eton jackets,
Are getting now their share of sighs,
And locks of hair and perfumed packets.

Love has a meaning now for them,
And past and future are forgotten ;
They too must wake the tide to stem,
And find, too oft, their craft is rotten.

How sombre images throng fast,
While life's dark clouds loom blacker, vaster,
While from the ruins of the past
Threatens an undefined disaster.

And ever as the shadows fall —
The burden of a gloomy ballad,
There comes—does that explain it all?—
A reminiscence of the salad.

A PRISONER AT THE BAR.

FAREWELL to Fleet Street's toil and din,
Its fun, and fear of writers,
For my "fause luv" has drunk the gin,
And left me all the bitters.

Farewell the shapely head that's set
So finely on your shoulders ;
Farewell coquettish curls of jet,
The joy of all beholders.

Farewell long lissome arms that draw
The ale with action queenly ;
The little teeth without a flaw,
The eyes that sparkle keenly.

Farewell, slim waist and natty zone,
Black brows, like dark sky-borders ;
And voice that gives a touching tone
To curtest waiters' orders.

I never more shall haunt the bar,
When coarser frames are feeding,
Nor hear, "Two coffees, one cigar !"
Cut short my tenderest pleading.

I never more my change will take
With timid touch that lingers,
Nor keep the coppers for the sake
Of the fair giver's fingers.

No more I'll quaff the shaken port,
Or, when I dare not risk it,
Betake me as a last resort
To Abernethy biscuit.

Fate, with inexorable laws,
Asunder far has fixt us.
Its ponderous and marble jaws,
The counter snaps betwixt us.

In every one who wants a drink
I see a hated rival,
And me you do not seem to think
The fittest for survival.

At last the vainly cherished flame
My jealous anguish smothers,
I see, alas ! that you're the same
To others—and such others !

To men who make a boozing ken
Of bowers where graces tarry,
Fat men, and aged men, and men
Who speak the speech of 'Arry.

So, as I cannot bear to think
My shadowy claims disputed,
I'll take one long, last, deadly drink
Of Thames, all undiluted.

And while beneath the vault immense
I spend my last night-watches,
You will, with wonted grace, dispense
Large smiles and scanty "Scotches."

And while around the waiters speed
With tasty supper dishes,
I'll coldly furnish forth a feed
For cheapest kinds of fishes.

*Ego in piscem desino,
Superné tu formosa !*
But what this means you will not know ;
Farewell, Beltenebrosa !

LINES BY A LATTER-DAY LAKIST.

WITH poet's not all heedless eye
Through the woods I took my way,
As blithe a man as you might meet
On a bank-holiday.

I paused before a cot nigh hid
In shielding foliage deep,
Like the caressing hand that soothsies
A kitten half asleep.

The woodman's child in wonder gazed
At such a town-bred ranger ;
O happy age that weaves romance
Round every passing stranger !

She stood the spirit of the scene,
A pitcher in her hand
Of water from the neighbouring brook—
E'en now I see her stand,

A little maid of swarthy hue,
With wonder all agape ;
Old shoes she had, and ragged gear :
I had not seen in many a year
So picturesque a shape.

Yet though ten times a day, I ween,
She to the brooklet tripp'd,
Sure, not for twice ten days her face
Had been in water dipp'd.

" My little maid," I reasoned mild,
" 'Tis wrong, so black a skin,"
'Twas nature's eloquence replied,
The freeborn peasant's grin.

So, saddened as I took the path
That up the forest led,
A mossy stone in harmless sort
Came sailing by my head,

And, turning round, the nymph I spied,
Her rustic missiles throwing,
Beside her, champion of the wood,
Her third surviving brother stood,
His little aid bestowing.

And little maid and brother Jim,
Till both were out of breath,
Gave vital stream and eye and limb
To unbeseeching fate and grim,
Necessitating death.

The child was farther than a man
Could reach with measured pace.
And dignity a run forbade ;
So, moralizing, up the glade
I strode with pensive face.

Full often faithful memory paints
The cot, the forest wild ;
And yet I wish that I had gone
And smack'd the sylvan child !

A PROTESTATION.

WHEN from thy lips the laugh of merry scorn
Rings out upon the flash of mocking eyes,
Though for a while my stricken spirit dies,
Glad to forget that it is so forlorn,

Yet in its numb despair new hope is born,
As at thy power springs pity from surprise ;
And soon again, for who in love is wise,
I grow complacent locks, too surely shorn.

Yet I forgive thee ; never in my pain
Harsh thought I harbour of my tyrant dear ;
Dead joy thou dost tenfold revive again,
And lasting cruelty 'twere false to fear.

But why, of figures weary, hast thou sat,—
That thou canst ne'er revive,—upon my hat ?

A NEW YEAR.

COLOURLESS, soundless, awful, heavy with folded
fate,

The infinite pomp of Time has brought another year to
the gate ;

The gate whereby from the desert untravell'd by mortal
ken,

They pass to the land forbidden, whose treasures are
barr'd from men.

Colourless, soundless, awful, chill from the wastes of
time,

The shrouded figure will enter Ilumanity's passionate
clime ;

And straightway the hearts of millions will take it from
all the years,

Bright with a joy that comes but once, or dark with the
storms of tears.

To some, like a rosebud folded, it comes with the
exquisite glow

That clothes the bare boughs with leafage, and tints fresh
flowers in the snow ;

And ever it opens and opens, with ever some beauty
unseen,
Till all the petals have fallen—and the joy that they lived
for has been.

And others whose Summer has vanish'd, whose garden of
beauty is bare,
Who know no soothing of sunshine, no fostering warmth
of air,
Will find that a jewel of price is cleansed of its dross by
rain,
And their hearts will be tuned to the season when Spring
flowers blossom again.

All hail, new year ! Be it joyful that message we darkly
wait !
Pass through Life's city lightly, and reaching the further
gate
May the joy thy coming has brought us a ray to the
future cast,
Nor seek, when thy rule is over, Oblivion's wilderness
vast,
But shine like a jewel for ever, enriching the changeless
Past.

A FAREWELL.

THE last of all ! This is the day
Foretold by each departing treasure,
As one by one they passed away
From wider waste of vanished pleasure.

What though it be the common law
That things best loved will surest leave us—
Though long ago thy fate I saw—
Not less the final stroke is grievous.

The Roman Father did not pause,
But doomed his sons when Justice claimed them ;
Necessity has sterner laws
Than if the sternest Roman framed them.

And 'tis my fate to lose for aye,
By mine own act my friend long cherished—
My one poor solace—that some day
'Twill be the same—when both have perished.

Farewell, of joys that once have been
Thou longest loved and last survivor !
Now, with an antique Roman mien,
I change my last remaining “ fiver ! ”

A CHANGE OF WEATHER.

THE softness of rain that has fallen has blunted the
edge of the blast,
It has raged, it has sobbed, it has yielded, the frost's
bitter empire is past ;
And abrim with a murmurous whisper, a thousand-toned
melody free,
A wind from the southward streams over the limitless
leagues of the sea !

No sharpness of sea-salt is in it, swept off from the foam-
crested arch,
But a breadth, and a warmth, and a promise, the breath
of rolled meadows in March ;
And filling the darkness with tidings of days that are
cloudless and fair,
Sweeps onward a bountiful pageant, an endless procession
of air !

The waves seem to slumber beneath it in dreams of its
tropical home,
Tho' shadows loom solemnly over that spread into
thunder and foam ;

In the gleam of the surf is no fury, no wrath in the
 sommolent roar,
For it tells in its slumber the tidings of peace to the
 storm-battered shore.

Oh, fiercely will bellow the tempests again e'er the
 halcyon Spring,
Again o'er the seething green billows will flash the white
 gulls on the wing ;
And often the rain will be mingled with foam that is
 flying like rain,
Ere a breeze from the home of the Summer brings shore-
 ward its tokens again !

But to-night it is ours ; and we greet it like strength in
 the trouble of fear,
A light in the darkness of danger, kind voice to a desolate
 ear ;
With eyes looking eagerly seaward the Winter awhile we
 forget,
For we know that the Summer is coming, and we know
 not its sorrows, as yet !

SECOND LOVE.

I

A HAZE of gold, and then the sudden wind
Driving wild clouds across a sleepy sky,
That blotted out a Summer's memory,
And left a misty leaflessness behind !
There was a sleep like death, when in my heart
There stirr'd the vigour of another Spring,
And in the Wintry dusk a bird 'gan sing,
Anew the song of nesting time. Apart
From hope I walk'd so long, that, like a storm
Unnoticed in great toil, joy gather'd head,
And broke in splendour ; as from skies of lead,
Down streams the sudden flood of sunlight warm,
Piling asunder fast the fleecy rifts,
While into isles of light the tempest drifts.

II.

I choose one face, not that it is more fair,
I woo one heart, not that it is more true—
Nay, curb your woman's pride—than thousands are ;
I knew you loved me ere I worshipped you.

I love you, as a mother loves the child
Whose father never saw the little face,
Dear with a dear regret, that weeping smil'd,
And heal'd new loss with love's bequeath'd embrace.
Not for like favour, nor consent of speech—
The cenotaph of a far-buried joy—
But for the look that living love must teach,
The beauty that can never fade nor cloy—
Truth that will falter not, whate'er befall ;
So first love promised. You are heir to all.

TWO SONNETS.

I.

AS one whom penury awhile hath prest,
When he the wishèd fortune doth inherit,
Let's no remember'd hardship vex his rest,
But of his former lack doth make a merit ;
So, in the golden calm of wedded love,
I do not grudge one hour that we were parted,
But mock secure the Fate, that could not move
The steadfastness of lovers single-hearted.
Yet in the sweet possession, that disdains
To mar its rapture with a vain regret,
One bitter trace of severance remains,
Whose bootless waste I never can forget :
And still with troubled cheer I think upon it—
The time thou wastest, putting on thy bonnet.

II.

Youth, with thy dower of ante-natal light
Unspent, unbarter'd still within thy breast,
All eager for the fame-achieving quest,
Which thou wouldst compass in Apollo's might,

Cleaving an upward way with eagle flight,
And spurning those dull paths that lead to rest,
Which some, erst venturous as thou, deem best ;
Pause ere thou quit the path of commerce quite,
And hear an older bird's or bard's sage song :—
In thy green years think poems, but write none ;
Mingle them with thy work, as shines the sun
Upon thy desk, but makes no figure wrong.
Fame without wealth is hungry crop to reap,
They too can make, who books must also keep.

MARCH.

LET March winds bluster as they will,
The flight of Winter chiding,
Let night-frosts blanch the meadows still,
Spring's earliest martyr-buds to kill,
I know a nook beneath the hill,
Where primroses are hiding.

What though against the fast-closed pane
The shower in gusts comes beating,
Though leafless branches creak and strain,
Warm winds will soon be here again,
For in the pauses of the rain
I hear the March lambs bleating.

What though the sky be overcast
For many days together,
The clouds that now are scudding fast,
Show here and there some blue at last ;
The stormy time will soon be past,
Then hey for sunny weather !

JULIA MAYING.

N O courtly pageantry can vie
With that, in woodland straying
I see with loyal vassal's eye
When Julia goes a-maying ;
For Nature's pomp, on breezy morn,
Mere human state can laugh to scorn.

The courtier flowers their mantle spread,
Lest common ground should soil her ;
And lest the prying sun o'erhead
Of any whiteness spoil her,
Each leafy tree with outspread hands,
A priest in benediction, stands.

The sun, whose beams oft quench the fire
That with their might contendeth,
From her hair's lustre doth retire,
And thus it more commendeth ;
For tho' his rays are killed, she quite
Replenisheth his banished light.

The wildwood birds no music trill,
To greet her as she cometh,
And though the bee is not quite still,
Full surlily he hummeth ;
Both bee and bird for envy fear
The voice they needs must love to hear.

From lingering kiss of parting light
To dawn's first blush of greeting,
Her absence only makes the night,
The peace to-morrow's meeting,
And Summer now is tired of flowers
Since Julia's self hath blessed the bowers.

“DONEC ERIS FELIX.”

WHEN through the hours of boyhood sweet
The heedless children scamper,
Some instinct bids them kindly treat
The playmate with the hamper.

And often, in life's graver days,
Will charitable sinners
Be good to one with nought to praise
About him but his dinners.

So relative a term is “poor,”
It baffles clear defining ;
For he, deprived of yacht or moor,
Will spend his days repining.

And he is rich, who at the worst,
Amid more empty purses,
Can satisfy that endless thirst
The true-born soldier nurses.

Wealth, great or small, with cares is fraught,
And some have sought to shun it,
And gladly moralists have caught
Those rare birds who have done it.

But vain to sing the woes of pelf,
While such affection hankers,
If not around the man himself,
At least around his bankers.

With smiles that show the friendly mind,
And words as sweet as honey,
Be sure that crowds the love will find,
While you can find the money.

THE LAST VOYAGE.

WHEN Youth sits dreaming at the prow,
And heedless leaves the lines to Pleasure,
By daisied mead and blossom'd bough
Life's river chimes a laughing measure ;—
While thus upon the stream we glide
Why waste a thought on time or tide?

But soon, Experience in the stern,
In racing craft we pull together,
From that keen teaching quick to learn
The niceties of slide and feather,
Green eddies with a flash of foam
Marking each swift length nearer home.

On lonely beach, when all is done,
Youth's pleasure and the pride of labour,
We wait the voyage none can shun
Nor share with closest friend or neighbour,
And patch at last as best we may
The craft forgotten till to-day.

And waiting thus upon the shore,
Thought seeks again the vision'd morning
When some great prize was still before
And fleeting waters gave no warning ;—
Till the tide rises still and grey
And floats us silently away.

A SUMMER BUZZING.

BUSY, curious, thirsty fly,
Who's to drink it, you or I?
For you follow every sip
With persistence to the lip,
Or each vain endeavour close
With a buzz about my nose,
Or frustrate it by surprise
Darting at my blinking eyes,
Till despairingly I cry,
“O con-found this thirsty fly!”

Nay, art gone? Thy pardon—There!
Now I feel you on my hair,
Now a sudden hum I hear
Menacing the shrinking ear.
Come, stern measures I must try
To expunge this curious fly.

True, for both of us there's room
In creation—Where's the broom?
True, thy little life to thee
Is as much as mine to me;

True, that thy intelligence
Is for thy small size immense ;
But believe 'twas madness quite
To molest me thus to-night.

There I have thee, on the floor
Slipper stills thee evermore !
So thy little life is past,
Safe from scorching wick at last,
Safe from ruthless spider's net,
Safe from boys more cruel yet—
Out of danger, out of pain,
Thou wilt never buzz again !
Vase of azure glass, I wis,
Whence thy name derivèd is,
Shall piece its shattered fragments ere
Thou again my cup wilt share.
Though the floor be somewhat mess'd,
Still whatever is is best ;
So no more my patience try,
Busy, curious, thirsty fly.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

THE Sun, from Progress dim and brief,
Seeks royally his rest ;
The tall trees like a broken reef
Raise many a misty crest ;
A tangle of black beech-boughs spread
Against the purple and the red
Marks, like the veining of a leaf,
The splendour of the west.

Soft is the air. The tinted flakes
Sail slowly o'er the sky ;
And scarce the pencill'd fir-tree shakes
As breezes wander by.
In depths of palest blue the stars,
Forth from their cloudy lattice-bars,
Are watching peacefully.

Sweet night of Peace ! Tho' yule-tide lore
Would claim a robe of snow,
Tho' merry Christmases of yore
Have seen the great logs glow—

'Tis meet a peaceful night and mild
Should greet at times the Holy Child
Who brought such peace below.

In deepening hush expectantly
The earth enshrouded waits,
Till comes the midnight message free
Through Heaven's wide-open'd gates,
To scatter'd fanes, which far and wide
Sped gladness o'er the country-side,
While yet unsolac'd tears were shed
O'er graves of long-forgotten dead.

In years to come this night will be,
For some I now behold,
Embalm'd in sacred memory
Among dear days of old ;
And has it come so soon to this
For one who dream'd, like them, of bliss
To stand at twilight on the hill
And view, with little pain,
Those dreams beyond a poet's skill
That ne'er can come again ?

Yet all pure joys that fade away,
All innocence of mirth,
Are stored for some awakening day,
Like sunshine in the earth
Which through laburnum-fount wells up,
And glows in shining buttercup,
And gives the cowslip birth.

Ah ! happy children laughing by,
This blessed night can sanctify
The fleeting joy that lights the eye
To be a joy for ever ;
Earth's loves, like waves, may break and swell,
Restless and vain and changeable ;—
The depth of love, that angels tell
To-night, can alter never.

TO A FAIR UNKNOWN.

'MID murmur'd words as sweet as song,
And gliding feet and floating laces,
And couples in sequester'd places,
I stand, and look and listen long—
And one white face amid the throng
Steals all the grace of all the faces.

The dancing rhythm is sway'd and bow'd,
Like sweep of corn, or play of ocean,
By strains all-potent of devotion ;
But, be the music low or loud,
Two little feet amid the crowd
Steal all the grace of all the motion.

Like a white blossom in the dark,
One face against my sombre fancies
Gleams, while the music of the dances
Keeps carolling like love's own lark,
Ere day grow broad enough to mark
The limits of my vague romances.

Fine poise of head, and girlish ease,
And joy, undimmed by sorrow's warning,
Frank innocence, concealment scorning,
A life as fragrant as the breeze
That stirs the blossom'd lilac trees,
And bright simplicity of morning—

I kiss in fancy your small hand,
Unused as yet to such caresses,
And lightly touch the sunny tresses ;
And while beneath the dawn I stand
And say good-bye to fairyland
A gladdened heart your bright face blesses.

AUGUST.

AT last we're in August ; no raw gust blows more,
gusts chilling and sore, gusts that filled us with pain,
And friends off together, shoe-leather on heather, the
length of their tether are ranging again.
My heart's in the Highlands, the Island of Skye, lands
distant and nigh lands, France, Canada, Spain ;
My heart is at Deeside, the seaside, the leeseide the deck,
and where trees hide the late-ripened grain.
My heart's in all places, with faces whose graces have left
pleasant traces from eyes blue or brown,
And hard is my fate, for I wait for the date for my
holiday late, for there's no one in town.

RUS IN URBE.

(*A Westminster Bridge Reverie.*)

BESIDE the sea ! The flaring street,
The noise has died away,
As eager fancy leapt to greet
That soft night breeze of May,
Sweet as a loved unlooked-for tone
To one in sorrow, and alone.

O, blessing far transcending hope,
O, trembling poise of bliss,
Reality has no such scope,
Nor thought such pow'r as this,
When to no conscious call arise
The inmost dreams to outward eyes.

The waves come rolling to the shore
From where the moonbeams rest,
Bearing some sparkles of their ore
Upon each foaming crest,
And with triumphant murmurs land
Their precious freight upon the strand.

The green crown of the cliff's dark height,
The crisp grass by the sea,
Shows clear against the depth of night
Its frostlike tracery,
And white against the deep, deep blue
A star shines like a blossom through.

And o'er the beach a hurrying rill
Sings of the Summer land,
Of fragrant fields and woodlands still,
Where tall trees list'ning stand,
Silent as moonlight, for the sound
Of nightingales who sing around.

But like the fairy bubbles blown
By children in the sun,
The Summer sweets that I have known
Too fast together run,
And patches of the world come in
Of passing crowd and traffic's din.

The clanging anvil in the tower
Shapes out the flight of time,
And reverie has lost her power
In the deep call sublime ;
Ah, never check'd sweet fancy glides
Where time is spelt by changing tides.

ELEGY.

(On a Pipe, accidentally burnt.)

O H, Meerschaum Pipe, unfailing friend
In solitude or hours of revel,
Alas ! that this should be thy end,
Reduced below a cinder's level !
Thy amber gone, thy silver black,
Charred, calcined, seamed with many a crack !

Yet now I cannot turn away,
I cannot deem thee all unsightly,
Companion of my toils by day,
My comforter and solace nightly ;
How should the loss of beauty end
The bond that linked us, friend to friend ?

Again I see thy form unmatched,
Rich colouring so featly blended,
Historic scars, where thou wast scratched,
Bright silver bands where cracks were mended ;
Thy amber like a dappled sky,
Thy curve a treat for artist's eye.

Thou didst embalm the memory
Of many a vanished hope and pleasure,
And taper fingers daintily
Have held thee to the light, my treasure ;
And sweetest lips in praising thee
Meant just a tone perchance for me.

Stored in thy tints the memory lay
Of college walk and shady cloister,
Of chapel bells o'er fields of hay,
Of morning ale and midnight oyster,
Of river thronged, of starting gun,
Of rushing crowd, of triumph won.

We've sauntered in the moonlit Quad,
We've paced the streets behind the Proctor ;
The daisied cricket-field we've trod,
We've trained in spite of "Cox " and Doctor ;
And thou must always needs assist
At quiet wine, or sober whist.

We've gazed upon the cloudless sky,
Basking still hours on fragrant pillows ;
We've watched the racing boats flash by,
We've lounged at ease beneath the willows ;
We've shared, how many a cooling cup,
Those fair May-terms when we were "up."

Inseparable, too, in toil,
And cheery in the Winter weather,
We've burned the studious midnight oil,
Or cracked the fireside joke together ;
Thou couldst call thought, or bid " begone sense !
Inspire philosophy, or nonsense.

And thou my muse hast often been,
When verses to Neæra turning,
While like a soul within thy bowl
I watched the fragrant bird's-eye burning—
Fair dream from which I quickly woke,
Too bright to end in aught but smoke.

But vain to nurse a vain regret,
Regret that manhood bids me smother ;
Lost pipes and loves we soon forget,
Or find and cherish in another ;
Yet none the less I lose in thee
A link of Nature's piety.

“ASHES TO ASHES.”

AT last the Chamberlain has stirr'd
From antiquated stupor ;
At last the oft-put pray'r is heard
Of manager and super.

No longer now the Surrey side
Its dispensation flashes,
While lesser London must abide
Its day of dust and ashes.

Poor Pros no longer lose their pay,
And seek in vain to bridle
Their taste for dancing out a day
When they're constrained to idle.

No more the *dies cinerum*
Will be a day of dinners ;
No more the stage-struck youth will come
To dance with pretty sinners.

Beauty no more with Wealth will meet,
While suppers are demolished,
Or witch the world with ankles neat,
Ash Wednesday is abolished !

This action of the Chamberlain's
Disarms both scoff and stricture,
And yet another side remains
To this, as every, picture.

The music-halls, still Middlesex'd,
Will meditate a rising ;
And journalists will miss a text
For scathing sermonizing.

When far behind the balls are left,
So happy and so hoppy,
Dramatic sheets will be bereft
Of very spicy copy.

And those who profit by the day
Will have a grumble lurking,
Because while glad to take the pay,
They do not care for working.

And hark ! From Strand to Drury Lane,
Some whisper, others shout it,
" Give us our grievance back again,
We cannot do without it ! "

CRICKET ON THE LAWN.

FAR better than tennis, the prettiest game
That ever set faces or hearts in a flame,
That ever inspired either pencil or pen,
Is cricket when played by young maidens and men.

The match all along was all *couleur de rose*,
For the men only play'd to encourage their foes ;
And the girls had no pity for kith or for kin,
And stuck at just nothing that help'd them to win.

They took without wincing three innings apiece,
And grounded their bats a good yard from the crease ;
And the verdict in answer to challenging shout,
Regardless of fact, was a hearty "Not out !"

Forgetful of fairness, and heedless of hurts,
They shielded their wickets with scattering skirts ;
And the straightest of bowling was trundled in vain,
When the batmaiden posed as a monarch of Spain.

A ball that would beat them, they'd boldly declare
Was a shame, if it wasn't distinctly unfair.
And they treated the bowler with trying constraint.
But the sneakers *they* bowled would have puzzled a saint.

Their captain was Maud, with her pretty tann'd face,
And lissome young form of ineffable grace.
And the keenest of players undoubtedly felt
An envy in eyeing her trim little belt.

As she sped o'er the lawn like a bird on the wing,
When she fielded a ball you half thought she would sing,
And when a hard catch came too high over head
You thought she would fly—but she pouted instead.

Then the men with a broomstick their innings began.
How the enemy crow'd when they bowl'd out a man !
But their logic was faulty, for none of them cheer'd
When a ball o'er the blossoming limes disappeared.

But they beat us ! 'Tis true that each light-footed witch
Had only to run half the length of the pitch :
But gladly I'll help them again when I can
To challenge like this the dominion of man.

POPULAR BALLAD.

THE MUSIC AND THE SNOW.

(By Milton Featherley Ionsone.)

FROM laden snow-clouds slowly
Float flakes in fleecy flocks ;
And a girl in the homelight holy
Jingles the shindy-box.

With vision'd glance ecstatic,
Undimm'd by Winter's pow'rs,
Up in his sordid attic
A wan musician cow'rs.

Below, the ceaseless pestle
On the mortar rains its blows,
As his long lithe fingers wrestle
With the agonized dominoes.

She for her pleasure playing
Great Things in the slumb'rous light ;
He in the struggle paying
The world for its scorn and slight.

But the numb'd hands 'gin to tingle
Beneath the passionate shocks ;
For warmth he is forced to jingle
The spindle-legged shindy-box.

And there dawneth a day when maiden
And poor musician meet,
When clouds are no more snow-laden,
Nor cold are the hands or feet.

And their souls, like sounds, shall mingle
In a grand Amen at last !
And the shindy-boxes jingle,
And time and tune are past.

A DERBY-DAY BALLAD.

*(To be recited gruffly by Gentlemen Elocutionists at
afternoon parties.)*

THE Derby Day! So it is, sir. It reminds me of
Melton's year.

'Twas weather like this in England, so hot, so dry, so
clear ;

And I was a well-dress'd chap, sir, and never had done a
wrong—

This old straw-hat and sand-shoes do well enough for
Boolong!

Do *you* ever bet? What, never? Well, hardly ever,
you say.

If I'd not betted, I might have lived at Streatham or
Penge to-day ;

Have dined with the Corporation, have taken in church
my rest,

And held my season-ticket, and travelled it with the best.

For I was a banker feller, and lived at Bedford Park,
With the wife and two little children, one light and
t'other dark ;

And my brother Jim, from the Temple, on Sundays
would come and dine ;
There wasn't in all the radius a happier home than
mine.

They say we all have our failings. I'm generous to a
fault ;
The man who can't promise a treat, sir, is seldom worth
his salt.
And out of the bit I hoped to win, I'd promised the kids
a spree,
And the wife some bits of finery, and a fortnight by the
sea.

You've heard of the glorious struggle ; you've heard how
the horses sped ?
How Archer, heaven forgive him ! brought Melton home
by a head ;
They tell me, when all was over my face was ashy
white,
And the missus has often told me that I didn't come
home that night.

It wasn't the loss I minded ; I'd kept enough to pay ;
But how could I give the poor little kids their fortnight at
Herne Bay ?

And the wife, with her bit of a temper, so shabby and so genteel—

With her dear old last year's bonnet, and her boots so down at the heel—

And Simpson, the brave old milkman, and Suds, the laundry lass,

And the staunch Collector fellers, who minds the water and gas.

Well, there, I couldn't bear, sir, to put them all in the cart—

Maybe I haven't much money, but I have got a tender heart.

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It was only a bit of a safe, sir ; you see 'em about in scores,

With handles that won't turn round, sir, and double-barrell'd doors :

And ours was a goodish-sized one, built strongly into the wall.

But I thought of the wife, and I nick't it—safe, bricks, and mortar, and all.

So the wife she had a new bonnet, and all that money
could buy,
And ribbons and lace and frillings, and happy and proud
was I ;
And the kids with spades, and buckets, and peppermint-
drops by the way,
With happy, chubby faces, went down half-price to
Herne Bay.

But the craven-hearted directors were tracing the safe to
me.
The fools ! the heartless dotards, why couldn't they let it
be ?
For when I thought of the kids, sir, I falter'd ; my eyes
grew dim—
I could not bear to leave them, so I laid the blame on
Jim !

Now Jim was a Barrister chap, sir—Q.C. in a small sort
o' way—
Never the chap for a judge, sir ; not up to the time o'
day ;
But Jim was grit to the backbone, and I'm not ashamed
of my tears,
For I cried like a child when Jim stood up and took his
seven years.

I did it all for the best, sir ; and maybe that I was
wrong,
But don't you cast stones at a feller because he's come to
Boolong.
I'm not much down on my luck, sir ; and I watch the
miles of foam,
And I pity the chaps on the steamer, for I know they
are sick for home.

And what with cards and billiards, I make a tidy bit ;
And if you'd like a drink, sir, here's always a brandy-and-
split.
And when you're back in England (don't mind me ; my
eyes is dim),
Go call at Portland Prison, and give my love to Jim !

A LAMENT FROM LLANDUDNO.

“ONE swallow does not make a Spring,”
So says the sweet anthology
Wherein Ionic minstrels sing,
And scattered pearls together string
Regardless of chronology.

One nimble bird of joyous note,
Who brought the sunshine hither,
With whiteness of her rounded throat,
And sheen of sea-bleached hair afloat,
Takes all the Summer with her.

No nymph whose charms the piping Greek
E'er let the browsing kid know,
But pales before the vermeil cheek
Of her, who stole from heav'n a week,
And spent it at Llandudno.

And still the plunging seas roll in,
Sun-fired or moonshine-whiten'd ;
In slumb'rous calm, or tempest's din,
They seek in vain the nymph to win,
Who once their surges brighten'd.

Gone is the beauty of the sky,
The shore has lost its magic,
The Autumn breezes brooding sigh,
Or raise their passionate vain cry,
A chorus ultra-tragic.

When April opes again the gates
For May and June to follow,
She'll spread in vain her tempting cates,
While Summer, over-dainty, waits
For one white-breasted swallow.

THE POETS' APOLOGY

To their Sisters and Cousins and Aunts.

YOU wonder that men such as we be
With eyes for the flow'r and the star,
Can find an Olympian Hebe
Behind a mere restaurant Bar ;

That possible Dantes and Shakespeares
Come down to a common-place pitch,
And squander their earnings to make Spiers
And Pond's representatives rich.

Such censure is surely mistaken ;
'Tis ours to evoke from afar,
Or, if it be sleeping, to waken
The soul that is bound by a Bar.

What mission more noble than tending
The taste for the high and the good,
Which cannot be vanquished by vending
Old whiskies and wines from the wood ?

And all the fair artistes dramatic
You designate "creatures" and "toads,"
Provoking a temper phlegmatic
With pointlessly maddening goads—

We all share the stigma of "creature,"
And "toad"? Falser things might be said;
For they oft, though untoadlike in feature,
Have jewels of price in their head.

And, bless them! they help us in meeting
The ills we are powerless to flee,
With a laugh that's as light and as fleeting
As the foam of a Soda and B.

Alas! there's no feeding on fancies;
So we haunt the Bodegas and Bars,
And Tragedies, Epics, Romances,
Give place to plain pot-boiling "Pars."

TO A LEXICON.

HAIL ! tome of sixteen hundred pages,
Key to the intellect of ages
Of Bards, Historians, and Sages—
Unfortunately Greek !
How skilled to solve, O Scott and Liddell !
The dark Thucydidean riddle,
To track the labyrinthine Middle,
And make dumb idioms speak ;

But not alone for learned worth,
Nor for thy pride of classic birth,
Nor dignity of portly girth,
This honoured place I yield
'Mid poets caged in green and gold,
'Mid creamy vellum volumes old,
Sound treatises, and ventures bold
In Reason's newest field.

Thy covers seamed with many a crack,
The lustre gone from leathern back,
The gilded letters turned to black—
Each blemish more endears ;

Each scar could tell how you have sped,
And missed some cherished comrade's head,
And lavish ink upon you shed
Keeps green the vanished years.

The cares of life relax their hold,
I grow with lack of knowledge bold,
Think "fool" synonymous with "old,"
And noise and mess a pleasure;
The lollipop's too fleeting joy
Has lost its fatal power to cloy;
Thoughtless, digestionless—a Boy—
Myself my standard measure,

I see thee first; and on through years
Of work and play, and sometimes tears,
Serene assurance, quaking fears,
And tardy growth of knowledge,
My ill-used Fetish, faithful still
Through high and low and good and ill,
We climbed together Learning's hill—
So far at least as College.

And then what golden days were ours,
What trust sublime in latent powers,
The while I reared Iberian towers
On airiest foundations!

With thee to show me Duty's tracks
When Reading evermore grew lax,
We passed such happy Terms and Vacs—
And some Examinations.

And still between thy covers rest
Faint savours of an early zest,
As flowers amid the pages prest
Smell sweet, though lost their bloom ;
And for the sake of pleasures gone
So well I love thee, Lexicon,
That thou in stone shalt rest upon
The poet's lowly tomb.

A GIRL OF GOLD.

THE miser's *auri sacra fames*
Compared with mine, a passion tame is ;
Nor would I spend the gold I covet,
Too dearly, selfishly I love it ;
And sometimes I have called it red—
My little sweetheart's golden head !

So white her skin, the prying sun
Prints little kisses thereupon,
Like wren's egg delicately speckled ;
And once I thought my sweetheart freckled !
A cheek the sun delights to kiss,
Full fair enough for mortal is.

My little girl, a child at heart,
With all a woman's nobler part,
Draws like a flow'r from common ground
The sweetness that she sheds around ;
And all she sees takes heaven's hue,
In passing through her eyes of blue.

Light as a bird on sweetbriar bush,
And full of music as a thrush,
As merry as a morn of May,
As tender as an April day,
Her like the light did ne'er behold,
My little girl with crest of gold.

THE CHILD AND THE BEGGAR.

(By Odoardo Jonsonc.)

SOFT through the minster window
The ruddy sunset glow'd,
And from the grand old organ
Sweetly the prelude flow'd.
'Twas only the organ player
Easing his spirit's pain ;
And a pallid beggar shuffled
Slipshod along the lane.

A high-born child in the minster
Shrunk from the driving show'r,
He had left a silk umbrella
In the gloom of the carven door.
It was only a silk umbrella,
But the beggar, oh ! how he smil'd
As he ran with the silk umbrella,
Nor reck'd of the high-born child.

'Tis only an old nurse weeping,
With tears that will not cease ;
'Tis only a verger crying,
" Stop thief ! umbrella ! police ! "

But I know that that silk umbrella
Is soaring away up the spout ;
Nor child, nor nurse, nor verger,
Nor beggar will get it out.

THE MIDSHIPMITE.

(*By Weathereye Adams.*)

O H ! Willy White was a midshipmite,
And a curly head had he ;
He sprung aboard at Portsmouth town,
He gaily flung his bundle down,
Cried, “ Now, my lads, for sea !
With a yeo, heave ho, and away we go
When winds are soft or tempests blow,
With a hilly, haullee ho, and it’s mother she shall know
That Willy did his duty like a midshipmite.”

Becalmed we lay in Pegwell Bay,
And whistled for a wind ;
There crawled a nigger up the side,
His colour gone, his tie untied,
His banjo left behind.
With a yeo, heave ho, round the world we go,
While favouring gales from the leeward blow,
And it’s hilly, haullee ho, for the Arab chaps shall know
That a Moor may be a burgess of an English town.*

* Negroes are admitted in England to municipal privileges.

The skipper swore, "Come, get ashore,

You nig, as best you can !"

When up spoke plucky Willy White :

"Captain," says he, "this isn't right ;

Is not a slave a man ?

With a yeo, heave ho, 'neath the Union Jack

A nigger chap is no longer black !"

With a hilly, haulee ho, and the skipper didn't know

What was suddenly the matter with his line of sight.

! A teardrop slid from every lid,

And the kind old skipper swore.

"Avast ! belay !" we heard him say,

"The lesson I have learned to-day,

No skipper learned before.

With a yeo, heave ho, and away we go,

So take your Blackamoor down below ;

For the liberty you took shall be his if he can cook,

And our Queen shall hear the story of the midshipmite."

THE ARROW AND THE HOUND.

(*By Excelsior Junior.*)

A^T Shanklin, in the Isle of Wight,
I shot an arrow such a height,
It fell to earth, I know not where,
And, sooth to say, I do not care.

A poem to the press I sent,
Receiving no acknowledgment ;
The subject was, I know not what—
If e'er I knew I have forgot.

A traveller the arrow found
Half-buried in his faithful hound,
And what he said in his distress
I do not know—I dare not guess.

And soon, when reading in the train,
I found my poem once again ;
But on the fire that in it burned,
A comic hydrant had been turned.

What verse with arrow had to do
I know not now—I never knew ;
But that such things should hap no more
I called upon the editor.

I aimed an arrow with such care,
It hit I scarce remember where ;
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,
He turned, and called me with a sigh—

But what, to tell you were not right ;
Besides, I have forgotten quite ;
But arrow, editor, and hound
Are famed to earth's remotest bound.

TWO VIEWS OF THE BOAT-RACE.

One View.

UP in the morning dim and early,
Swallow your coffee in hottest haste,
Off to the station, cold and surly,
Never a moment of time to waste.

Football scrimmage along the platform,
Fight at the carriage for half a seat,
Wedged by an ex-prize fighter's fat form,
Out of the question a friend to greet.

Rank cigar-smoke heavily floating,
Air that breathes of an early drink,
Blatant talk about boats and boating ;
Here we are on the river's brink.

Weary wait by the gusty river,
Course is cleared and the shouts outburst,—
Never again will I stand and shiver,
Here they come, and the wrong one's first.

Another View.

A happy murmur of many voices,
The river sparkles its crowds between,
Every wakening tree rejoices
In April's glimmer of hazy green.

Blue in ribbons, and flags and streamers,
Blue on waggons, and coaches smart ;
Blue on barges, and tugs and steamers,
And blue in the eyes that rule my heart.

Falls a hush on the merry humming,
Silence mounts to a growing roar ;
Now stand steady, the boats are coming,
There is the gleam of a light blue oar !

Here they are coming, and we are winning,
Feather'd blades in a rhythmic flash
Lash the stream with a clean beginning,
As on to the nearing goal they dash.

Bang ! it is over ; but just beginning,
I think, as the multitudes stream away,
A race that is better worth the winning,
With happy omen this boat-race day.

CHILL OCTOBER.

THE strong north-east is out, and dulls with grey
The distance, tho' the sky o'erhead is clear
And deep in hue as on an August day ;
But thro' the tall grass and the leafage sere
There shivers something of a frosty breath—
The boding whisper of approaching death.

Bare are the fields where late the corn stood high,
And busily the mill-sails whirl to meet
Their shadows on the sward, that ever fly
And bend the swaying grasses as they fleet ;
Cold is the sunshine, cold the winds around,
But no chill touches this enchanted ground !

Enchanted garden, though no magic fount,
Nor jewelled trees, nor marvellous flow'rs are there,
Cresting the summit of no fairy mount,
Fenced by no trackless wood, nor dragon's lair—
At blazon'd portal no grim warder frowns,
'Tis but a shelter'd hollow in the downs.

But in that dimple of the wold there sleeps

A nymph of Spring's glad train, who dreaming stray'd,
And on her slumbers yet no wild wind peeps,

Of marring such serene repose afraid ;
The smile still playing on her parted lips,
Which once kissed red the daisies' petal-tips.

No daisies now are here, and yet the grass
Is green, and fresh, and smiling, as in Spring,
When every balmy hour in state must pass,
And some choice offering to April bring,
While sunlight laughed amid the fleeting showers,
And shamed the petulant raindrops into flowers.

Primrose and cowslip, bluebell, daffodil,
They are not here, and yet they haunt the place ;
Hawthorn and violet, they linger still,
Unseen, indeed—yea, all the Summer's grace
Seems to be hiding, only that it may
Be left behind when Summer goes away.

And, standing here, 'tis easy to believe,
With eyes half-shut and drowsy in the sun,
That 'tis a later hour on Summer eve,
That nightingales will sing when day is done ;
That hawthorn scents along the dusty way
Will breathe in dew beneath the moon of May.

So come calm hours when in the failing years
Some vision of a Spring for ever past,
Unchilled by hopelessness, unstained with tears,
May win us, while the spells of fancy last,
To dream, when Winter comes, we shall not roam,
Heart-broken, empty-handed, far from home.

FAINT HEART.

TO think you are but an hour away,
If I stroll through street and square ;
'Twas sixty miles but yesterday—
A distance of despair.
To call and to live in your smile awhile
Good reasons I have in plenty,
But an aunt is as bad as forty mile,
And fear is another twenty.
So Sussex I find, when all is done,
No further away than Kensington.

And if some magic my steps impel
To-morrow into the park,
And the horses afar that I know so well
My eager eyes should mark,
In a leap of joy my heart would start
With hope and love a-drumming,
And somewhere into the crowd apart
I'd turn when I saw you coming.
Then watch with envy the coachman's back,
And the golden dust in your carriage track.

Alas ! I never can dare to woo,
Nor ever your heart can prove,
Though every word that I speak to you
Seems eloquent of love ;
And when the meeting at last is past,
Whose joy imagined crowns me,
How can you read the glance I cast,
While deeper anguish drowns me,
Where ever fainter shine your eyes
Across a gulf from Paradise ?

ODE TO MARCH.

HAIL, wind-slinging slayer of Winter !
Hail, donor of life to the dead !
Hail, March, thou tyrannical tinter
Of noses with red !

Now longer the reign of light is,
Now higher the heavenly arch,
Thou bringer of buds and bronchitis,
Tempestuous March !

Thou callest the clarion breezes
To trumpet thy triumph on high,
And the tear-trickled traveller sneezes
With grit in his eye.

The lay of the lark that is soaring
Is drowned, to the songster's surprise,
By the daffodil-moon that is roaring *
In laureate skies.

* *Vide* Tennyson's Inaugural Ode to *The Nineteenth Century*.

The hounds of the Spring are unmuzzled,
They scoff the Commissioner's care,
A course which has palpably puzzled
The maniac hare.

The throistles are billing and cooing,
Their breasts feather-fended from chills;
They have no quarter-day to bring rueing,
Of *coups* or of bills.

The violets crouching in crannies,
Peep out through the leaf-hidden mould;
But the darlings of nature, as man is,
Are blue with the cold.

Your pardon, ye March-praising poets,
My Lincoln and Bennett is flat;
The month is all right, but you know it's
No joke to a hat.

LINES TO A PERUVIAN AIR.

CLEOPATRA was purty, 'tis commonly said,
And fair was the maid whom Cophetua wed,
But there never was woman, from beggar to queen,
Could rival the charms of my little colleen.

She's as plump and as pert as a little brown bird,
And her voice is the sweetest that ever was heard ;
With a bit of a break, like the nightingale's tune,
When your sweetheart has miss'd ye, some *evenin'* in
June.

She's a smile that's as bright, and an eye that's as true
As sunshine of April, and midsummer's blue ;
And I'd just be a baby again to be press'd—
An' no harm at all—to the little one's breast.

Her fine little ears are more precious by far
Than the costliest earrings of empresses are ;
And the darlin' is happy whatever she hears,
It's bound to sound good to such beautiful cars.

Sometimes when the wind's in the east, and it snows,
There's a little red tip to her queer little nose,
But it's just a new charm, when she slyly looks down,
With a smile like the jools in Victoria's crown.

There's a spirit of mischief that slumberin' lies—
The sly little divil—in each of her eyes ;
But he's soon wide awake if ye give half a chance,
An' it's worth it, to see how he'll sparkle and dance.

Her face it looks mighty severe till she speaks ;
Then the dimples go playin' about in her cheeks,
With her head on one side, like a robin who hops
Mighty bold to the window—considhers—an' stops.

The darlin' ! she's suitors and sweethearts galore ;
There's Tims by the dozen, and Mikes by the score,
An' sure the poor boys show an elegant taste,
For they'd lose both their arms to encircle her waist.

She'll be here by-and-bye, and I'll give ye the wink,
But don't ye be lettin' her know what I think ;
She'd be twice as proud if she thought I had seen
Sich a gem of the world in the little colleen.

A BOAT-RACE BALLAD.

OF all the signs that make it clear
That England's power is going
There's naught so sad as what we hear,
In gloomy chorus year by year,
About the art of rowing.

Or can it be that critics use
Imagination's quiver
For random shots against the crews
Who represent the rival blues
Each year upon the river?

They feather high, they feather low,
They do not swing together ;
The wonder is the boats can go
When those who pull can neither row,
Nor swing, nor slide, nor feather.

They're late and early, short and long ;
They miss the stroke's beginning ;
They do, in fact, so much that's wrong
That neither crew, however strong,
Seems capable of winning.

They hang and bucket, screw and jerk,
So runs the doleful ditty.
But force and form contrive to lurk,
And make them do a power of work,
And look uncommon pretty.

A NEW YEAR CAROL.

THE silence of the frosty air
Is bulged by sullen smacks ;
As citizens all unaware
Come down upon their backs.
I shiver, picturing the spray
Frost-traced upon the pane ;
I shiver, only that I may
Enjoy the warmth again.

Through ample curtain folds I trace
The horse's struggling tread,
And the rude cries as loafers race
To sit upon his head.
And many men to-night in bed
Sip gruel, swathed in flannel,
And numbers wish that they were dead,
While tossing in the Channel.
But cosy lights for me are shed
On gleaming glass and panel.

When I am call'd to-morrow morn
'Twill give me raptures mental,
To gloat on passengers forlorn
Who've missed the Continental.

I'll dream upon their scalding cup,
And frame by firelight mellow
A vision of thick smoke lit up
By gleams of crudest yellow.

And some are sleeping in the snow,
With naught to eat to-morrow,
And some at eight o'clock will go
Upon the scaffold, sad and slow,
Over the gulf of sorrow.
But I am girt about with ease,
Nor reck commotions fateful ;
I'm warm enough, howe'er it freeze,
And others' troubles somehow please
The unctuously grateful.

A ROYAL GRIEVANCE.

(After the Barrel-Organ Grinder.)

WHENE'ER I take my walks abroad,
How many snobs I see,
And though I never look at them
They stand and stare at me.

If any envy Royal state
They surely cannot guess
What constant cruelties of fate
Befall a young Princess.

The baron's or the butcher's wife,
The bishop's daughter dear,
Can walk with all the ease in life
Upon Parade or pier.

And even famous actresses,
And beauties of renown,
Can make their purchases in peace,
Unmobbed, about the town.

I cannot leave the garden-gate,
I cannot take the air,
But thousands on my coming wait
And stare, and stare, and stare.

I'd rather face the unemploy'd,
With voices rough and loud,
Than be persistently annoy'd
By this unmanner'd crowd.

They hurt my health, they mar my mirth ;
It's really much too bad,
The blighting charm that Royal birth
Possesses for a cad.

AN APRIL SONG.

WAKE, timid buds ! smile, patient earth !
From icy bonds escape, rill !
And sing, all dimpled o'er with mirth,
A song of praise to April !

Come, with your murmur'd music soft,
And velvet coats, you shy bees ;
Pillage the almond blooms aloft,
Drain deep the ruby ribs.

Sing loud, you merry birds, sing loud !
Too long the leaves are resting ;
Their myriad curtains soon will shroud
The nooks where you are nesting.

Now severed loves unite again—
How Spring the distance narrows !
And kisses, thick as April rain,
Sound like the chirp of sparrows.

Wisdom is good, and yet how dear
Are boy and girlhood's schooldays ;
When life was April all the year,
And all were April fool-days.

LOOKING BACK.

A WIND from March has lost its way,
And frolics in the April day ;
The flow'r-bewilder'd bees
Flit here and there the gusts between
In blossom-foam on waves of green
Like birds on dancing seas.

High in the breezy depths of light
As thick as stars on moonless night
The larks are singing clear,
And busy as the birds that build
The stream with dusky sunlight fill'd
Goes babbling to the weir.

Forget not now those tokens sweet
That come when Spring scarce dares to greet
The light that lingers long,
When twilight like a quiet child
Steals in upon an evening mild
To hear the robin's song.

When first the willows by the lake
Their shadowy gold begin to shake
 Before the winds of March ;
When from the ruins of the rain
The evening sun uprears again
 The Spring's triumphal arch.

When spaces of the hedge grow green,
With breadths of barrenness between,
 And in dark garden ground,
When laden clouds hang overhead,
The daffodil and primrose spread
 Their prison'd sunlight round.

When in the shelter of the hedge
The keen March wind has lost its edge,
 And o'er the tufted grass,
All dry and breathing of the Spring,
The building rooks on shining wing
 Make music as they pass.

When with a giant hand the storm
Sweeps up the wealth of sunlight warm
 From all the darkening plain ;
Till from its cloudy grasp outrun
The captive sunbeams, one by one,
 And all is gold again.

O sweetest time of dawning hope,
When fair is fairer for the scope
Of beauty yet untried ;
Unwasted yet the Summer hours,
Nor chilling rain, nor wither'd flowers
Their promise have belied.

A LAMENT FROM THE LAWN.

L IKE scholars, the thermometer,
And also the barometer,
Take very high degrees.
And Spring's untiring angels
Light up the great white candles
That deck the chestnut trees ;
From every woodland nook, who
So lists may hear the cuckoo
Song-swung upon the breeze.

But what avail to men is
A life that's always tennis—
A fever and a fret !
The lightning snicks men serve me,
They startle and unnerve me ;
And with a mad regret,
I see my best endeavour
To give them something clever,
Land well within the net.

Now grey-eyed Maud defiant,
With figure slim and pliant,
The coming service dares.

My eyes, enamoured, wander,
As absently I ponder,
 On Love's distressing snares.
And then she glances icily,
Because a ball cut slicily
 Has caught me unawares.

And while the score keeps mounting
(She plays, I do the counting),
 My spirits further fall.
I hear her light feet flying,
As all too late I'm trying
 To reach a dodgey ball ;
But spite of slip and blunder,
Slight Maud, the white-robed wonder,
 Still keeps it "Vantage all."

Now, Horace Brown, at tennis,
A match for most young men is.
 And Maud's play is divine.
Her maiden fancies floating,
Last year were all for boating :
 And then the hour was mine.
Oh, hateful nets and rackets ;
Oh, horrid shoes and jackets ;
 Oh, cruel service line !

She will not quite despise me,
Though solemnly she eyes me,
 With glance as clear as dawn ;
Or patiently appealing,
Her racket half concealing
 A dainty little yawn.
Farewell, farewell, I'll leave you !
No more muff shots shall grieve you,
 Lithe leopard of the lawn !

Sweet Maud, I quite forgive her,
I'll scull me up the river,
 Where deep weir-waters fall ;
And, Byron-like, I'll smile, as
I court the fate of Hylas,
 And with low murmurs call
Upon the Nymphs who drowned him ;
While Horace Brown, confound him,
 Is singing out, " Love all ! "

AN EQUINE SOLILOQUY.

THE Derby Day—a perfect day—bright sun and lively breeze,
And e'en the bridge at Charing Cross looks pretty through the trees ;
Or it may be—for what am I?—a broken-down old hoss—
The trees look pretty 'cause they hide the bridge at Charing Cross.

The cab rank's quiet and empty—the best have gone away,
A festive crowd to Epsom town this merry Derby Day ;
But I—the growler's shafts a world too wide for my shrunk flank—
With drooping head and shaky legs, remain upon the rank.

You'd hardly think, to look at me, that some few years ago
I faced the flag on Derby Day—twelve thoroughbreds a-row ;
Crack tipsters said they never saw a better-looking horse,
And no one now in London town will drive me to the course,

Yes, I was famous once, and lived! And now I've naught
to tell

But endless drives from Euston Square to dreary
Camberwell;

And while they pile big boxes up I wish that I were
dead.

Or grudge a sixpence in the fare—and I a thoroughbred!

The cab-yard cannot kill the joy that swells the racer's
heart—

I see the scene in fancy's eye, it's getting near the start.

I see the Beauties in their pride; oh! how that pride
'twould stab

To hint that they may come, like me, to draw a four-
wheeled cab.

Oh! might I find my weary hoofs once more upon the
sward,

Before I limp that last sad morn into the knacker's yard,

Oh! might I leave the sombre skies and sooty air of
town,

And snuff the living speed that streams across the breezy
down.

Then for a little while I know I'd leave my ills behind,
And race in mad delight again abreast of any wind ;
Fly o'er the rhythmic-beaten turf, and mock the swallows
 skimming—

“ Four-wheeler ! ” “ Right, mum. Here you are.
Kim up ! ” All right, I'm kimming.

A MODERN LOVER.

(AT THE INVENTIONS.)

(With apologies to the Pagan.)

COME, love, in the late lazy Summer,
To the temple of science and sound,
Come list to the drum of the drummer,
Or watch the wild wheels going round.

While the brass of the bandsmen comes crashing
Through the hum of the crowd, and the plashing
Of fountains that foam into flame,
And, like liquid kaleidoscopes flashing,
Put rainbows and rockets to shame.

We can roam through the realm of Aquarius,
And notice the specimens various,
Long, snaky, and oval and fat,
From the eels, with their noses gregarious,
To the sheen of the sporadic sprat ;
From the lobsters with nippers nefarious,
To the plaice like a Wilfer hilarious,
Or an infantile angel squashed flat.

For the age that Charles Reade calls Gigantic
Is fraught with the idylls of old ;
And steam has its stories romantic,
While love-tales as truly are told
Where cranks mop and mow like an antic,
And fidgety persons grow frantic,
As out in the wood and the wold.

Yes, more to my taste than the flutter
Of soft Summer dresses ; more sweet
Are the thoughts that the drummer would utter,
When he bangs on his drum like the shutter
That revellers urgently beat
When they've found, 'twixt the step and the gutter
That they're dowered with the key of the street.

A love such as mine is more glorious
Than trophy of soldier victorious,
Than triumph of science or art ;
But civilisation censorious
Would shrink from the accents uproarious,
That alone could give voice to my heart.

Then leave the Aladdin-like scenery,
Where lamps curve in lucent catenary,
Or blaze in bright clusters above ;

Quit the myriad groups 'neath the greenery,
From cottage, and counter, and deanery,
 From Mayfair and Camberwell Grove.
Where the roar of the restless machinery
Gives promise of privacy plenary,
 I'd shout my avowal of love.

A BANK-HOLIDAY GRUMBLE.

LIKE Box or Cox—I quite forget
The one who got a holiday,—
With mind distraught, I fume and fret,
To plan a really jolly day.

Say, shall I dare the raging waves,
And cross to Calais over,
Or join the South Belgravian Braves,
And march and fire at Dover?

Or shall I chance the wind and tide,
And sail about the river,
Or take on Hampstead Heath a ride,
And wake the sluggish liver?

Or shall I start at random out,
To any place I light on,
And join the pleasure-hunting rout,
At Margate, Hastings, Brighton?

No! If I quit my native land
'Twill ravage my interior;
At Dover I'll no rating stand
From insolent superior.

The demon launch, or clumsy tub,
Will spoil the peace of sailing ;
On Hampstead Heath the donkey'd rub
Me off against a railing.

And if I take the crowded train
With rude familiar jokers,
I'll wish that I were free again
From peppermints and smokers.

No, after all, I'll spend at home
A calm, if not a jolly day,
And some fine morning forth I'll roam,
That's not a public holiday.

A CRY FROM DUBLIN.

IF ye seek for the cause of the present disthress,
And look for a way to get out of the mess,
To free poor ould Ireland from throuble and fear,
Ye've only to give us a Parliament here.

There's a somethin' the Government can't understand.
We don't care for rint, and we don't care for land ;
We've a heap of respect for the Queen on her throne,
But we do want a Parliament-House of our own.

Sure, the bhoy wid a turn for display'd have a chance
Of takin' the flure of the House for a dance ;
Or gettin' its ear—in his teeth—by-and-bye,
Or catchin' the Spaker a one in the eye.

I can see how 'twould be on a field-night so gay,
Wid the ladies upstairs to encourage the play,
While the Spaker steps out in the iligant scene,
Wid the mace round his head and his wig on the green.

Oh, Ireland, me counthry, what glory and fun
When the struggle is over, the Parliament won !
A happier counthry will never be known
When we manage affairs in a way of our own.

A STRANDED POET.

THE gloaming falls, the hush of night
Calls out the cats, and calms the winds down ;
Belinda shuts the windows tight,
And draws the blinds down.

The neighbours' children in the street
Play trains and shriek in shrill soprano,
Or thump—a common evening treat—
The old piano.

I do not doubt 'tis good for me
To dwell among these tents of Kedar,
And yet to-night I ought to be
Beneath the cedar,

That shades a corner of a lawn,
Begirt with leafage, dark and fragrant,
Where blossoms show like discs of dawn,
And breezes vagrant

Come with a busy rustle through
And set a-swing the rose's censer,
And wake the stars in deeper blue
To light intenser,

And bring the nightingale's clear trill
With odours of the blossom'd bean-fields,
And the fresh clover-scents, that fill
The dim unseen fields.

Forth on the stillness softly flow
Some bars of passionate Beethoven,
Where by the open window's glow
The dark is cloven.

Thus white-frock'd Maud contrives to fix
All eyes and ears, while talk she hushes,
And grey moths at the candle-wicks
Make frantic rushes.

Oh, Tantalus ! If I were there
She'd let the others talk, I know it ;
For me she'd play sonatas rare—
Her stranded poet.

Yet when we meet her shafts she'll fling,
And call me "not quite kind," or "funny ;"
She doesn't know there's such a thing
As want of money.

WORDS FOR MUSIC.

THE singer's voice was tender,
Her eyes were large and bright,
She fix'd her gaze upon him,
And sang with all her might.
I know not what she was singing,
Nor why she look'd his way ;
But there suddenly came upon him
A feeling of great dismay.

For he saw that the space around him
Had larger and larger grown,
Where the lustrous eyes had found him,
And fastened him there—alone.
And myriad eyes that he could not see
With anguish made him sweat,
From the china-blue of the soldier blonde
To the brown of the pert brunette.

And he felt that his nose was swelling,
And he knew that his face was red,
And the bald, bald spot seemed spreading
Till it covered his shrinking head.

And he knew that his coat sat badly,
And his shoes wax'd suddenly tight,
And he thought that his tie was all awry,
And he trembled to put it right.

But the singer his soul was sounding,
As she caroll'd of passion and pain,
And he vow'd in a whirl of surging thought
That he'd never come there again.
And Time in infinite circles
Seemed spreading and spreading round,
Where Fate, like a pebble had dropped him there,
In an ocean of pain profound.

And the tune in his ears was ringing
As he stumbled against the door,
And he cannon'd against a waiter,
And the coffee ran over the floor.
And he tried to tip the Vicar,
And trod on the Persian cat,
And he hurried away with a stranger's coat
And somebody else's hat.

THE LOVER TO BIG BEN.

STRIKE no more ! Be it only one,
My wonderful day has scarce begun.
Stay thy stroke, be it only three,
She crosses the meadow to meet with me.
Five ! Ah, would it were really five,
For now my wooing is like to thrive.
Oh, golden stroke ! if it were but seven,
I kiss my love in the golden even.
Nine ! No further than restful nine ;
Quiet, and fragrance, and gloom divine.
Ten ! yet ten, and I feel the bliss
Of my love's soft pressure and parting kiss.
Twelve ! the hours, like a rose, enfold
Beauty in beauty and sweet in sweet.
The wonderful story, in brief, is told
As I hear the chimes in the noisy street ;
And now love's glory gilds the scenes
Whose living joy is done,
As up in heaven the white moon gleams
The gold of the setting sun.
Over dim meadows, far away,
Silent, and cool, and sweet with hay,

She looks from her window and hears the hour
Toll'd from the depth of the village tower,
That stands against the moonlight low,
Like midnight cut for a cameo.
She hears clear songs from the thickets break,
And the stir of kine who are wide awake,
And revel sedately in growing clover—
So the sweet day is sweetly over !
Pass fair hours in the sultry Strand,
Fair, as afar, o'er the blooming land,
Pass fair hours, in a bridal march,
'Neath the wide heaven's triumphal arch.
Pass by the Summer's regal way,
O'er chequered pavement of night and day.
Take, fair hours, an offering meet
Of all your treasures to lay at her feet ;
Her feet, who waits like a queen for me,
Thron'd in a fair simplicity.
And every beauty with you bear
Of all the Summers since Summers were.
Take the first smile of coming mirth,
When the wood is all wood, and the bank bare earth,
When thick as bees the primroses wander
Amid dead leaves, and the violets squander
The breath of heaven on every wind,
Prowling the hidden loves to find.

Take her the delicate golden green
Of sun-bathed leaves, and the blue between.
Daisied meadows all harrow'd well,
And the big forest's cloud-like swell ;
Raindrops gleaming on freshen'd spray,
Rainbow's promise at close of day ;
Hazy blue of the sea afar,
Liquid calm of the evening star,
High whiteness of a cloudy noon,
Tender light of the rising moon,
Song of skylark and Robin Redbreast,
And of every bird that dwells in nest,
From sparrows' chatter at pairing time
To nightingale's self, and the mellow chime
Of cuckoo, who tells in his glade apart
The sleepy beating of Summer's heart.
Moonlight beauty and morning splendour
Homage meet with their lives must render,
Quench'd by the light around her thrown,
The living light that is all her own.

TO "BRASS BUTTONS."

(The Custodian of certain Pleasure-grounds.)

THOUGH past maternal recognition change
The features of the well-remembered scene,
'Tis sweet to find, how far so e'er I range,
One face the same as it hath ever been—
Thy face, that borrows from the guarded bowers
Earth's hardness, not the softness of the flowers.

Time writes no wrinkle on thy azure vest,
Nor dims the lustre of thy golden band ;
Before the triple brass that shields thy breast
The scythèd mower stays his ruthless hand,
While fancy deems them evermore the same,
Those buttons brass that share thy name and fame.

I was thy neighbour once, thou rugged file ;
My schoolboy days were passed in sight of thee,
I saw thee every day, and all the while
Thine eye unsleeping glanced suspiciously,
And coming on thee suddenly to-day
I trembled, but I did not run away.

Unchanging as the cuckoo's constant note,
No rising generations live thee down ;
Those who to-day thy modest stipend vote
In ancient days have trembled at thy frown.
Hail, fossil terror of a vanish'd morn !
Hail, destined dread of children yet unborn !

Yet art thou not all harsh ; the nesting bird
Hymns thee its refuge 'gainst the prowling boy ;
When through the threatened bowers thy voice is heard
The sweet array of roses sways with joy,
And lilacs over thy protecting head
From cluster'd chalices their fragrance shed.

And when thy dust in daisies smiles at last,—
Long be that one, that destined smile delayed,—
Tho' the old terror be for ever past,
And those most vaunt who erst were most afraid,
Yet children, when thy honour'd name they hear,
Shall guard in love what now they spare in fear.

Thou shalt be genius of the bosky spot,
In thy large recompense ; and shalt be good
To babes left slumb'ring where the sun is hot,
To hungry urchins far from home and food,
And in remoter ages there shall grow
A myth about thee from the long ago.

White cloud with sunlight edged thy band of gold,

Heav'n framed with waving boughs thy coat of blue,
Laburnum points thy buttons ; and behold !

The fir-post portals children thronging through,
Singing glad songs, and bearing blooms divine
Of garlands—elsewhere cull'd—to lay upon thy shrine.

OVER.

THE season's done, the blinds are down,
The merry haunts are all deserted,
And vacantly the windows frown
Where erst we danced, and dined, and flirted.

No more the dawn on revel steals,
No more the music's urgent thrumming
Is broken by the rolling wheels
Of dancers late and later coming.

Fast, fast gay groups at every turn
Drop from the toilsome round of pleasure,
And staggered Detrimentials learn
The value of a Perfect Treasure.

This, 'mid the dull and noteless years,
Shines out for ever white and festal,
As through the turbid crowd appears
One dominant, delicious Vestal.

A queenlier creature ne'er was seen,
Though sober truth condones the treason
Of hinting she had been the queen
Of not an isolated season.

A softly-sombre lawn conceal'd
Her bosom's coy and placid graces,
Whose sentient ivory reveal'd
The pattern of the veiling laces.

In cheeks too bloomless for her years,
In haunted eyes, still bright and starry,
Buried too deep for easy tears
I traced the *aliquid amari*.

Or would the patriot purist urge
A homelier mode of speech, what care I?
Buried too deep again to surge
I traced the *aliquid amari*.

The charm of sympathetic speech,
The bond of unachieved romances,
Had made us equal, each to each,
Like some of Euclid's lighter fancies.

And when two kindly cynics meet
Who know too well the world is hollow,
Yet wish to find the surface sweet,
A pretty play is sure to follow.

And now we are so loth to part,
I wish that I had never met you—
I cannot offer you a heart,
I cannot bear to quite forget you.

A willing vassal, lowly-proud,
Your wit and beauty hold me ever—
A beauty far above the crowd,
A wit too fine to pose as clever.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT.

ERE evening's beauty fades away
In perfect peace of night
The east is growing golden-grey,
And all the glory of yesterday
Lives on from light to light.

Oh, fair face that I lov'd so long,
That fancy ever drew,
That haunted my very soul like a song—
Till yesterday I did you wrong,
Your beauty I never knew.

White flow'r of love ! I worshipp'd you,
But never thought to win ;
As Summer's splendour ever grew
My love, my joy, kept growing too,
But hope came never in.

Your sweet eyes smiled, your face was grave
When, asking overmuch,
A joy undreamt, unguess'd, you gave
To me, your love, your king, your slave,
Made noble by your touch.

All beauty of all Summers past
Dwells in this tender light,
And Time's own heart is beating fast,
And the Summer of Summers has come at last
This blessed midsummer night.

Come, dawning day ! such day as this
The world has never known ;
Come, day with all your hoarded bliss,
Bright setting for the jewel-kiss,
She keeps for me—my Own !

PUMPKINS.

L O, little brother Crispin stands,
His face aglow with pleasure,
Upraised in ecstasy his hands
At Clement's garden-treasure.

And Clement, quizzically kind,
Surveys the beaming bumpkin
As if 'twere equally his mind
To show him to the pumpkin.

How happy he, the cheery soul,
Whose reasonable wishes
No wider visions would unroll
Than visionary dishes.

For him the homely pumpkin opes
No gate of fairy story,
Tells not of vainly-cherish'd hopes,
And all unhoped-for glory.

When, sitting lonely by the fire,
Fast fading into ashes,
At once the dimly-dreamt desire
To living fact upflashes,

When at the wave of fairy's wand
A pumpkin turns a carriage,
And hope itself sees naught beyond
The bourn of blissful marriage.

In fairy tale, and life alike,
However fair the seeming,
The fatal hour will surely strike,
And show we are but dreaming.

The flowery path grows steep and rough,
Fade far the palace portals,
And humble pie is meed enough
For ordinary mortals.

AU REVOIR.

SWEET friend of all, the chum-coquette,
Whose glances, eloquently pausing,
With a half-humorous regret
Ask pardon for the hopes they're causing,

Like the Queen's carriage, driving fast,
Or boat-race glimpse of dark and light-blue,
Or ball that shoots the slogger past,
Or meteor flashing through the night-blue,

So was your coming—look'd for long,
Till life was filled with only looking,
Like a great choir with swelling song,
Or villa small with smell of cooking.

And then you came ! The very train
Felt, when you left, its lamps grow duller,
And, with a brand of sugar-cane,
The village took a sweeter colour.

We met to-night ; and I am pleased,
With that caressing touch that lingers,
Though seven other partners squeez'd
Your hand, with five-and-thirty fingers.

Like sunlight you were born to bless ;
No narrow codes your conduct cumber,
Conferring all the happiness
You can upon the greatest number.

A joy you give, that cannot fail,
To all your captive Bobs and Cyrils,
Who Hope's all-golden ladder scale,
As mount aloft imprison'd squirrels.

To-night how gracious was our state,
How sweet our converse and confiding,
As in that bowery nook we sate,
And heard the devious dancers gliding.

And all the sparkles in your eyes,
Ran gyroscopic to the centre,
The sunlight of a paradise,
Where Adam vainly longs to enter.

Round went the waltzers ; urgent strains
Well'd from the deep, unfathom'd fiddle ;
Moist-headed men with swollen veins
Career'd insanely down the middle.

And here and there, with rhythmic grace,
A truly sympathetic couple
Mov'd, as the spheres in order'd space,
Like music turned to motion supple.

Dear despot of a few fleet hours,
Hours very fleet, and very pleasant,
Life's sweets are vanquish'd by its sour,
The fair past by the horrid present.

For you to-night, in other scenes,
Pick up the thread of other blisses,
Of other realms the welcome Queen,
With other loves, and other kisses.

And I, impatient of the smart,
That comes of such a sudden rending,
Am fain to soothe the fretful heart
That tingles while the wound is mending.

But when this parting pain is past,
(Perhaps next week, perhaps to-morrow)
And time its kindly veil has cast
Over this dark, unlovely sorrow,

Your face will shine, the grief forgot,
As, when the waters cease to shiver,
The loosestrife and forget-me-not
Again are mirror'd in the river.

AN OLD BOOK.

WITHIN these pages, clos'd so long ago,
Like a crush'd flow'r, a fragrant-petall'd year
Kept all its sweetness still ; unfaded here
Was stor'd a bygone Summer's fancied glow.
When every day new wonders had to show,
And time seem'd still to linger, as it flew,
In one bright moment, and the roses blew
As once in all a life the roses blow.

And as I gaze on the remember'd page,
I hear the ceaseless chiming of the brook
Under its sun-warm'd timbers grey with age ;
The bluebells nod to a forgotten breeze,
The cuckoo calls from some green hidden nook,
And there her window shines amid the trees.

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